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A calm negotiation : Louise Bogan and the poetics of emotional expression

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A CALM NEGOTIATION: LOUISE BOGAN AND THE POETICS OF EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION

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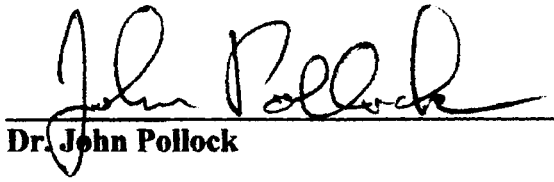

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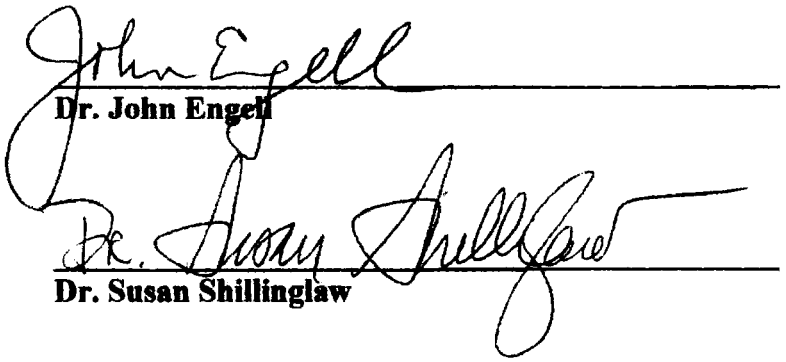

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ABSTRACT

A CALM NEGOTIATION: LOUISE BOGAN AND THE POETICS OF EMOTIONAL EXPRESSION

by Sarah Dallas Harkrader

This thesis examines poetry reviews Louise Bogan wrote for *The New Yorker* during her thirty-eight year career writing for the magazine. It clarifies ongoing critical debates over whether Bogan believes poetry should provide release for emotional energies, or whether it should restrain emotion by exercising the intellect. Each chapter outlines one stage in the development of Bogan's attitudes toward emotion and intellect in poetry, and argues that Bogan arrives at a final synthesis that fuses the two modes of expression.

The larger goal of this study is to begin to establish Bogan's role as a significant literary critic, and to redress the neglect her prose has garnered among scholars. Despite Bogan's prominence in critical communities during her lifetime, there has been no published research to date exploring the impact of her literary journalism. This study also includes an appendix that lists each essay-length review Bogan wrote for *The New Yorker*, along with the poets discussed in each review.

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to Pablo,

who read, and loved, every draft

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Introduction

Louise Bogan's significance as a twentieth-century literary figure rests beyond dispute. She published six brilliant volumes of verse, won almost every major poetry award during her lifetime, and was Poet Laureate of the United States from 1945 to1946. Her collected poetry, *Blue Estuaries: Poems 1923-1968*, can still be found on bookstore shelves, and noted literature anthologies consistently include several of her poems. In addition, Bogan's enigmatic persona, fraught with terror and despair, continues to intrigue scholars attempting to unravel her tormented psyche. Early reviewers commended the poet's compact lyric structures and profound expressions of felt experience, and her contemporaries - poets like Yeats, Eliot, and Roethke - praised her verse as some of the finest of its day. Indeed, Bogan has developed a reputation as the rare female poet who garnered artistic respect during the male-dominated modernist era.

Such approbation has been tempered by a peculiar neglect regarding Bogan's role in American letters. Bogan's literary reputation thus far has centered entirely on her poetic output, but she was a prominent voice in critical discourse as well. From the early 1920s until the late 1960s she published dozens of articles in literary journals along with a book-length survey in 1951 called *Achievement in American Poetry 1900-1950*, and from 1931 to 1968 she wrote semi-annual poetry reviews for *The New Yorker* magazine. Verse in fact represents only a small fraction of Bogan's *oeuvre*. Claire Knox's *Louise Bogan: A Reference Source* holds 726 entries for works written by Bogan, but only 115 of these entries are for poems. In addition to poetry, the list includes nineteen short stories and ten translations, but the remaining 582 items consist of over four decades of

literary criticism. It is clear that Bogan's career as a critic, at least in volume, overwhelms her voice as a poet. Yet to date, there has been no published research exploring her impact as a critic, her major themes, her relationships with other reviewers, or any other topic concerning her criticism.

This oversight proves unfortunate considering her role in shaping the landscape of American letters during her lifetime. For almost forty years, Bogan's occupation placed her at the nexus between a small circle of twentieth-century poets and the reading public that determined their reception. Thousands of literature enthusiasts each year perused her columns in *The New Yorker* and other periodicals for recommendations on contemporary verse. And her views were respected. Yeats called her one of the best critics of poetry in America (Yagoda 107), and her reviews bolstered *The New Yorker*'s literary reputation during its early years. Bogan acted as an arbiter of literary taste for four generations of poets and readers, and as such represents a crucial link between an artistic community and its cultural milieu.

Scholars have not yet accessed the copious benefits of analyzing Bogan's literary journalism. First, and perhaps most obviously, critical reception studies of twentieth-century poets would profit enormously from research into Bogan's views, especially considering her wide readership. She reviewed most, if not all, major poets, including W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, W.H. Auden, Elizabeth Bishop, Marianne Moore, Edna St. Vincent Millay, and Robert Lowell, and wrote about dozens of "minor" poets as well. Scholars attempting to resurrect forgotten or neglected writers would also benefit from her comments on poets respected during their careers but now virtually unknown.

Bogan analyzed developments in the craft of poetry as they happened, as Pound and Eliot pioneered Modernist techniques, as Cummings's released his first verse experiments, and as Ginsberg and the Beats forged a literary counter-culture. She was on the scene for all of it, and wrote about all of it, often delineating literary movements before they were defined as movements. She formulated inchoate models of poetic interpretation that scholars have developed further in modern analyses. Her critical writings offer researchers a profound glimpse into how poetic developments unfolded in real time, before a work's initial impact became inevitably diluted by the passage of time.

The goal of my research is to provide a first step in establishing the significance of Bogan's achievements as a critic. Though many aspects of her literary journalism, including her participation in various critical communities, are certainly of interest, my methodology centers on the detailed contents of her writings, and attempts to renegotiate our understanding of Bogan as a poet by analyzing her prose. There has been a long-standing debate among Bogan scholars over the poet's thematic intentions as expressed through her poetic persona. Since this disagreement has permeated criticism about Bogan since the 1920s, it seems a logical starting point to allow her critical writings to resolve the argument about her poetry. The point of contention involves Bogan's emotional poetics. Some critics claim her verse provides a release for the poet's intense emotional energies, yet others believe her strict verse forms and dense language serve to restrain these overwhelming passions. There has been no synthesis of these two views, and since Bogan scholarship has significantly decreased since the mid-1980s, this integration has been left for me to accomplish. Fortunately for my research, Bogan used

her critical writings, especially *The New Yorker* reviews, to work through her own private artistic struggles, so they provide much insight into her opinion on poetic expression.

The first chapter of this study outlines Bogan's career in literary journalism, focusing on her work for *The New Yorker*, and summarizes the critical debate among scholars over Bogan's use of emotion in verse. The remaining chapters explore the chronological development of Bogan's attitudes toward emotional expression in poetry. I focus exclusively on *The New Yorker* reviews since they comprise the larger part of her critical output, and since they also illustrate a profound evolution of ideas during her career. The second chapter of this study examines Bogan's early reviews, written in the 1930s, which illustrate her belief that poetry should unabashedly express passions she believes are generally repressed in the modern age. The third chapter explores her career during the 1940s, a time when she distinctly prefers intellectual vigor in verse and de-emphasizes the need for emotion in poetry. The fourth chapter considers her work in the 1950s and 1960s as she admonishes poets to put their feelings through rigorous examination before writing them onto the page. This chapter represents the last stage of the process when Bogan claims that poetry fuses intellect with emotion in ways impossible outside the language of verse. My analysis of the integration Bogan achieves in her prose resolves the debate about her poetry, and in the process illustrates the value of continued research into her critical writings as a significant contribution to twentieth-century literature.

Chapter 1: Bogan's Career and Her Critics

The pursuit of poetry consumed Louise Bogan's life. She began practicing the craft during adolescence, and spent her life and career studying its intricacies. Her profession, especially as a literary journalist, provided a stabilizing force for her personal life, which was marked by continual bouts of intense jealousy, rage, and depression. Despite Bogan's years of psychological torment and occasional stays in neurological hospitals, her literary output never faltered. When creative despair overwhelmed her ability to compose verse, she wrote criticism of poetry. Even in her final years when she published very few poems, she still devoted her thoughts to artistic discussion in reviews and commentary about the work of her contemporaries.

Bogan was born on August 11, 1897 in the small mill town of Livermore Falls, Maine, and grew up with her father, who worked as a supervisor for the International Paper Company, her socialite mother, and her brother Charles. The Bogan family moved to Boston in 1909, where Louise excelled in English studies and the literary society at the Girl's Latin School. She spent most of her free time in the Boston Public Library studying verse, and at fourteen began writing her own poetry modeled after the lyrics of Swinburne and the Rossettis. At eighteen she entered Boston University, but left after her freshman year to marry Curt Alexander, a military officer with whom she had a daughter named Maidie. The couple's short marriage endured considerable tumult, but in 1920 Alexander died of pneumonia before the two officially divorced. Bogan's subsequent widow's benefits allowed her to move to New York City and concentrate on her career as a poet. In 1924, Bogan married Raymond Holden, an editor at *The New*

Yorker who encouraged her to write poetry reviews for the magazine. The marriage lasted only five years, after which a series of intense love affairs occupied Bogan's romantic life.

By the time Bogan was twenty-four and living in New York City, her poetry had already appeared in many major literary journals, including *The New Republic* and *The Literary Review of the New York Evening Post*. She devoted her first collection of poetry, *Body of this Death*, published in 1923, to exploring sexual conflict and the difficulties in reconciling passionate impulses with rational thought. Though some critics complained about the obscurity of her verse, most praised its compact imagery and dreamlike quality. Six years later her second book, *Dark Summer*, won equal admiration. Critics noted the "intricacy of feeling" inherent in her tightly structured lyrics (Winters 32), and lauded the book's exploration of instinct that overwhelms reason. In 1937 *The Sleeping Fury*, her final collection of all new poems, continued to examine tensions between intellect and emotion, and was praised as well for its linguistic precision and concentrated imagery. Bogan's poetic output decreased significantly after *The Sleeping Fury*, with only thirty-three new poems printed from 1937 until her death in 1970, but her career as a critic flourished. She published several poetry reviews and critical articles each year for *The New Yorker* and other periodicals, and in 1951 finished *Achievement in American Poetry 1900-1950*, a chronicle of major thematic and technical developments in poetry. She also produced an edition of her essays in 1955 called *Selected Criticism: Poetry and Prose*, and two years before she died oversaw publication of her collected verse, *The Blue Estuaries: Poems 1923-1968*.

Bogan's poetry reviews for *The New Yorker* represent her most prolific and sustained contribution to American letters. She started writing for the magazine six years after its February 21, 1925 debut, and remained on staff until her last review appeared in the December 28, 1968 issue. Harold Ross founded the magazine as a weekly catering to "sophisticated" denizens of metropolitan New York, and filled its early pages with comic essays, cartoons, jokes, light verse, and satiric coverage of current events. Though *The New Yorker* had sold well since its first issue, by 1930 its editors were still searching for ways to distinguish the magazine from its major competitors, *Life* and *Judge*. *Life*, a humor weekly that preceded the modern *Life Magazine*, traditionally claimed artistic superiority to other weeklies, and *Judge* originally ran politically charged stories, so editors at *The New Yorker* decided to emphasize the magazine's belletristic qualities (Yagoda 34). Chief literary editor Katharine White persuaded Ross to include more serious poetry and fiction in the back pages. Clifton Fadiman and Robert Benchley were hired to write fiction and theater reviews, respectively. And in 1931, upon White's recommendation, Ross hired Bogan to contribute semiannual reviews of new poetry.

The New Yorker's reputation as a venue for intelligent literary discussion grew after Bogan began writing for the magazine. Fadiman and Benchley were contributing personal responses to fiction and drama, but the two men lacked Bogan's critical perspective. With Bogan's reviews, artistic concerns such as the rise of vers libre, the quality of experimental verse, the idea of "feminine" poetry as a genre, and other issues usually reserved for academic journals or poets' correspondence found a wider public audience. Readership began to evolve from those who simply wanted a laugh to those

engaged in American letters, a change that helped *The New Yorker* gain prestige. Bogan's influence increased in 1939 as the new managing editor William Shawn began to solicit Bogan's advice on what poetry to publish, and also allowed her almost complete editorial freedom. Along with higher quality fiction and verse, Shawn began printing more hard news features, especially during World War II when humor writing became less desirable (Yagoda 271). He also hired Edmund Wilson, a critic who, like Bogan, was more concerned with a work's artistry than its mere entertainment value, to replace Fadiman as fiction reviewer in 1943. Intellectual vigor prevailed in the back pages, and by the mid-1940s, *The New Yorker* was firmly established as an influential part of the literary world.

From March 21, 1931 to December 28, 1968 Bogan published on average two essay-length poetry reviews each year for *The New Yorker*. She also wrote from three to fifteen mini-reviews per year for the "Briefly Noted" section. Bogan read hundreds of review copies each month, one or two of which received in-depth analysis, and up to ten of which were granted shorter commentary. She labored over her prose, often spending months studying each collection, and experienced enormous guilt when forced to turn a piece in late (Frank 372). Despite the time it took to compose each review, Bogan wrote approximately 340 pieces for the magazine during her career, excluding poetry and short fiction. Perhaps because the magazine began as an entertainment weekly, but more likely because of Bogan's own delight in sardonic wit, her prose often conveys irony and sarcasm in pithy encapsulations of her views. Her tone is never pedantic; rather, she

writes elegant expositions on the state of modern poetry and what she predicts for its future.

Bogan was part of a reviewer-critic community that flourished in the early twentieth century. During this time, literary critics and the reading public became progressively interconnected. H.L. Mencken, Bogan's immediate predecessor in the review essay genre, wrote for the public, rather than for other critics, and he started a trend that alienated academics from the center of literary culture. Mencken's sharp-witted, lucid evaluations of contemporary literature, which appeared primarily in *The Smart Set* from 1914 to 1923 and then in *American Mercury* from 1924 to 1933, fought against elitism in university culture by advocating for authors who were traditionally scoffed at by the academy (Dickstein 331). Because of Mencken's active promotion of unconventional writers, new authors began to appeal to him and other literary journalists, rather than to university scholars, for appreciation and promotion of their work.

From the late 1920s to the 1960s, the next generation of literary journalists, including Edmund Wilson, Malcolm Cowley, Lionel Trilling, and Alfred Kazin, pressed the review essay toward cultural and social critiques rather than mere "thumbs up" or "thumbs down" evaluations. These essayists linked history, biography, politics, and sociology to the literature they reviewed in ways that challenged the traditional lines between cultural study and literary criticism. Their breadth of subject matter and wide readership allow us to study them as chroniclers of cultural events of their day, and also as indicators of a time when public critics arbitrated literary thought. During this time, literary magazines became a venue for a sort of critical counter culture, one that dictated

artistic currents and gave some of the great twentieth-century poets and novelists the attention they could not garner in universities. Louise Bogan was a strong voice in this community of critics. Her career spans this era, and her critical voice offers a shining example of a reviewer who began when public critics dictated literary culture, and ended after English studies became established as an institutional pursuit for university scholars (Martin 270).

Bogan's significance as a twentieth-century literary figure, however, extends beyond her involvement in the review essay community. As is the case with many other critics, in Bogan's work her poetry, rather than her prose, has become her most publicized contribution to literature. We know her as a poet first, and as a critic second - if at all. This dual role places her directly within the poet-critic tradition that extends back to Horace. Poets have produced some of the most influential treatises on the elements of their craft. T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound started a great revival of the tradition from Victorian-era dormancy with essays and tracts that detailed their purposes as modern poets (Lipking 439). Bogan's involvement in this group of poet-critics, along with her wide readership, makes her a valuable resource for studying the effects of the poet-critic community on literary developments in America and abroad.

Bogan's relative obscurity compared to Mencken, Wilson, and other critics of the period arises, I believe, from her purposeful ideological isolation from her contemporaries. Though we can now place her historically within the reviewer-critic and poet-critic communities, Bogan herself abstained from active involvement in either of these groups. She worked to distinguish herself from her colleagues, partly out of fierce

competition, but also because unlike her university-educated counterparts, she relied solely on experience and intuition to replace the formal education she had abandoned at the time of her first marriage. She avoided allegiance to any mode of criticism, and often shunned critical modes she considered snobbish or abstract. For example, she loathed New Criticism and its method of "close reading," claiming that it favors minutia over the larger view of human experience literature presents. Rather than writing disconnected, esoteric theoretical discussion, she focused in her reviews on practical matters involved in the craft – the effects of enjambment, subject appropriate imagery, or linguistic concerns about diction or syntax.

She further departed from her reviewer-critic colleagues by removing direct social or political commentary from her discussions. While Wilson and Cowley promoted cultural agendas in their reviews, Bogan did the work of the poet in hers; that is, she labored over ways poets can best express the depth of human feeling, the joy and pain, the horror and delight in being alive. Unlike her contemporaries, she was an intensely personal critic, infusing her articles with the same themes she explored in her poetry. She examined more closely the human mind and heart than did her reviewer colleagues, yet her prose never descends into simple explanations of her own method of poesy. Her literary voice was distinct in its ability to describe with intimate awareness the concerns of practicing poets, while maintaining the detached voice of the critic analyzing the efficacy of individual poems.

The editorial freedom Bogan was given at *The New Yorker* allowed her to pursue her own poetic interests in her reviews, and one of the most prevalent modes of inquiry

that appears throughout her career involves the use of emotional expression in verse. Her concentration on emotion in her critical essays comes as no surprise given the highly emotive nature of her poetry. Biographical details of her life – pathological rage and jealousy, periodic visits to neurological hospitals, intense depression – further explain her interest in emotions that overwhelm reason. The subject so pervades her career that criticism written about Bogan has centered almost entirely on the issue. Some scholars claim that her poetry presents a persona overcome with uncontrollable passion, and infer that such intensity must represent Bogan's personal psyche expressing itself in the poems. Others see her use of precise formal structures and compact lyrics as the poet's attempt to contain the passionate emotional energy that often caused turmoil in her personal life.

Since one purpose of my study is to resolve this dichotomy of critical views regarding Bogan's verse, I now turn to a brief review of responses to her poetry to illustrate the argument I attempt to resolve. Early reviews of Bogan's poetry immediately establish the significance of emotional expression in her work. In a 1925 article about *Body of this Death*, Llewellyn Jones believes that readers must focus on feelings expressed in Bogan's poetry to understand its meaning. Jones writes that the poem "A Tale" must "be read rather for the emotional drama which the imagery symbolizes than for any explicit story with a physical locale" (29). In the 1937 issue of *Poetry*, Morton Dauwen Zabel compares Bogan's use of emotion in *The Sleeping Fury* to its use by her contemporaries. He writes of Bogan's verses, "Their rigor of form and emotion was an immediate reproach to the lyric slovenliness around them. They showed a poetry that

said nothing that did not come from the deepest sources of personal and poetic sincerity" (48).

Reviewers of Bogan's *Poems and New Poems*, published in 1941, shift the conversation from simple acknowledgement of intense passion in her verse to the beginnings of a debate on the issue. In a 1941 review, Marianne Moore calls Bogan's poetry "compactness compacted" in an attempt to account for the density of Bogan's verse, and writes, "One is struck by her restraint – an unusual courtesy in the day of bombast" (61). Moore argues that the restraint arises from the strict workmanship of the poems, so that the passionate emotions of the poet do not overwhelm readers in a deluge of feeling, but rather appear in rational measure for readers to think about and understand. The next year Stanley Kunitz posits an opposite view of Bogan's work. He sees her poetry as expressive of an imagination "where an unknown terror is king, presiding over the fable of a life, in the deep night swarming with images of reproach and desire" (64). He believes that her strict verse forms and compact lyrics depict a poet straining to express the intensity of feeling that she cannot yet grasp, a poet attempting to release fully her poetic energies. Unlike Moore, Kunitz does not see Bogan's supposed "restraint" as a positive aspect of her poetry, but rather as an indication of inability to express appropriately those powerful feelings. This subtle but significant difference of opinion sets the stage for the next several decades of Bogan criticism.

Reviewers of Bogan's poetry during the mid-fifties and early sixties take sides on whether Bogan uses her poetry to express or to repress emotion. Richard Eberhart's 1954 review of *Collected Poems: 1923-1953* clarifies the point of contention. "The originality

[in Bogan's poetry] is in the forceful emotion and how this becomes caught in elegant tensions of perfected forms . . . . The feeling is of somber strength, of a strong nature controlling powerful emotions by highly conscious art. There is marked skill in her restraint" (67-8). Eberhart interprets Bogan's lyric precision as a form of control, as if the poet restricts emotional outbursts through careful plotting of rhyme and meter. Yet in the same year, Elder Olson posits precisely the opposite interpretation. He sees the poems as profound expressions of deep emotional turmoil, treating especially those passions that arise from romantic love. The notion of restraint plays no part in Olson's opinion. He sees the persona of Bogan's poems as "a woman: sensitive, passionate, sensuous, and I should say, strong-willed; intelligent, but emotional rather than intellectual; led against her reason, almost against her will, into love" (72). He states his position clearly and simply: "Bogan is a poet of the violent emotions" (77). The disagreement between Eberhart and Olson illustrates the dichotomy under which subsequent critics have formed their views.

The early 1960s brought into the discussion perhaps the most influential critical analysis of Bogan's work. Theodore Roethke's 1961 homage to Bogan's collected work praises her depth and range as a poet and elegantly distills the pointed themes and structures of the poems. He describes the dichotomy between expression and repression as central to understanding the complexities of Bogan's poetry. He states, "Love, passion, its complexities, its tensions, its betrayals, is one of Louise Bogan's chief themes" (91). Rather than claiming Bogan as a poet of emotions, though, he grants her the following endorsement:

> Behind the Bogan poems is a woman intense, proud, strong-willed, never hysterical or silly; who scorns the open unabashed caterwaul so usual with the love poet, male or female; who never writes a serious poem until there is a genuine "up-welling" from the unconscious; who shapes emotion into an inevitable-seeming, an endurable, form. (91)

Roethke acknowledges the intense emotional nature of Bogan's poetry, but commends the weight and reality of the feelings expressed. He extols her sensitivity in structuring fully-realized emotional experiences into beautiful lyrics without artificial or pathetic sentiment.

Roethke charts a path that should have allowed critics to explore the fusion of thought and emotion in Bogan's work. But after the 1960s, scholars again take sides on the issue just as Moore, Olson, and others had decades earlier. In 1977 Jacqueline Ridgeway begins the feminist discussion of Bogan's poetry that will continue until the late-eighties. Ridgeway claims that Bogan uses formal lyric structures to conceal emotions the poet considered typical of inherently inferior "female" poetry. Ridgeway believes that Bogan's poems illustrate "the emotion which is distanced by formal structures" (141), and this distance embodies the tensions evident in much of her verse. In the mid- to late-eighties, feminist-informed criticism emphasizes Bogan's poetic restraint so that Bogan as a poet becomes an image of repression and reclusivity that threatened to silence the poet completely in her final years. Ruth Limmer, Bogan's literary executor, published an article in 1984 with the conspicuous title "Circumscriptions" in which she claims that Bogan wrote very little poetry during the last two decades of her life because she feared creative confrontation with unrestrained passions that so often overcame her (172). Several years later, Gloria Bowles frames a

book-length analysis of Bogan's poetry around the idea that Bogan's poetic limitations, that is, her inability to release passionate emotion, provide the overarching conceit that pervades her body of work. Bowles concludes, "Bogan . . . finally achieved such control that she could no longer express any emotion at all" (137), a succinct encapsulation of critics' views until the 1990s about Bogan's allegiance to emotional restraint.

More recent scholars have begun to challenge the notion that Bogan finally succumbed to the pressures of restraint. In 1994 Christine Colosurdo analyzes Bogan's establishment of self-identity through verse, and claims that the poems embody the struggle between expression and repression that Bogan attempts to resolve. She writes that "her poems do not describe the battlefield, they are the battlefield itself" (340). William Kerrigan takes further issue with feminist readings of Bogan's work in 1998 by claiming that interpretations emphasizing restraint rob Bogan of "her form, her poetics, and her subject matter, canceling her achievement far more effectively than patriarchy ever did" (64). Critics like Kerrigan attempt to shift the focus of Bogan scholarship from negative views of Bogan's restraint and silence to praise for what her poetry expresses. However, Bogan criticism has waned since Kerrigan's analysis, and the poet has all but disappeared from critical discussion in recent years. The lack of current Bogan scholarship is unfortunate since the debate that has permeated criticism of her poetry has not yet been resolved.

While the work of recent critics has moved the debate closer to resolution, the question remains: how does Bogan use poetry either to express or to repress the overwhelming emotional energies in her life? The primary goal of this study will be to

answer that question by delving into the poet's critical views as they appeared in *The New Yorker* reviews, for the answer depends on a close look at Bogan's career beyond poetry. Bogan's attitudes about emotional expression in verse underwent an important evolution over the course of her career as a critic, and her path through these changes will be the path I follow in the remaining chapters of this study.

Chapter 2: Terrible Emotion: 1931-1940

By the 1930s Louise Bogan had already published two books of poetry, several critical essays, and numerous poetry reviews in the *New Republic*, *Poetry*, and other literary magazines. She was firmly established in New York literary circles, and appeared situated to conquer the world of letters. But beneath the veneer of a successful career and her marriage to the prominent editor Raymond Holden, Bogan's personal life was rife with emotional upheaval. Uncontrollable fits of jealous rage and creative despair caused intense depression, and in the same year her first review appeared in *The New Yorker*, Bogan became a voluntary patient at a New York neurological hospital. She spent the rest of the decade struggling through divorce, tumultuous love affairs, and repeated emotional collapses that often required psychiatric help to overcome. Her poetry during this time explores the panic and terror associated with the dark side of her psyche, eventually giving rise to a collection appropriately titled *The Sleeping Fury*. Perhaps because of the psychological trauma she endured during this decade, poetry reviews she wrote for *The New Yorker* consistently reveal a woman wedded to the lyric as a form of emotional release.

Though not with her first review for *The New Yorker*, Bogan begins the 1930s with a review that both laments the dearth of truly exceptional modern verse and simultaneously expresses hope that poetry will again rise to the heights of power she knows it can reach. In a 1932 review of several new collections, after writing a few disparaging words about the superficiality of new poetry collections by Conrad Aiken and John Masefield, Bogan turns a delighted eye toward T.S. Eliot's recently published

"Triumphal March." After a brief note of praise and a quotation from Eliot's poem, she opines, "We need not despair. Poetry is not dead. Perhaps sleeping" (Feb. 13, 1932: 65). Bogan views contemporary poetry as a dormant art form waiting for poets with new zeal to wake it from its passionless slumber, a revival that requires poets to begin composing effusive lyrics supported by the weight of the passionate human spirit. She often infuses this type of rhetoric of emotional expression into her descriptions of ineffectual modern poetry during the first half of the 1930s. For Bogan, poetry must provide nourishment for the deprived human spirit, and symbols should "roar up from the page" like fire (Feb. 13, 1932: 62-5).

Throughout the first half of the 1930s, Bogan expresses similar views. In an earlier review, Bogan writes that poetry has "something to do with the terrible, unaccountable processes of the human spirit" (Mar. 21, 1931: 85). Both agony and joy become central to poetic meaning for Bogan, and the power of the form rests in its ability to express human capacities for love, hate, rage, and despair. Her affinity for poetry expressive of human emotion becomes clearer in a 1934 review of Edna St. Vincent Millay's *Wine from These Grapes*. She sees Millay's book as demonstrative of the poet's maturity, for Millay's work now looks beyond cultural or political causes for human degradation, and turns toward mankind itself for the source of human suffering. The collection confirms Millay's considerable "literary endowment" in its concern "with the lonely, imperfect human spirit, the facts in life and death that grieve it, the brief intimations that bring it joy, and the horrors it breeds for itself" (Nov. 24, 1934: 91). Bogan places the emphasis here entirely on the emotional weight in Millay's lyrics, so

that the source of praise is the "joy" and the "horror" the poems express about human experience.

The reviewer undoubtedly admires Millay's work in *Wine from These Grapes*, but Bogan's advocacy for emotive verse becomes even more apparent a few years later in 1937 when she criticizes Millay's subsequent book *Conversation at Midnight*. She believes that Millay neglects the range of feeling possible in humankind and now seems more interested in linguistic and political concerns. Bogan describes *Conversation at Midnight* as a philosophical argument that takes place among seven men representing different social, political, and spiritual orders. The poet herself does not take sides, and, in effect, achieves only partial dialectic success in penning an argument that reaches no conclusions. Bogan sees many problems in this volume of Millay's poems, but the primary deficiency is the lack of emotional expression.

> All of this [volume] is certainly well, and sometimes brilliantly, written. Much of it is amusing. But little of it is moving. It was once Miss Millay's function (and still is, for that matter) to move, not to expound. She who once placed (and will again) one fit word next to its fit neighbor, so that both resound more than ordinarily, here expends precious energy in creating figures which turn out to be little more than expert products of taxidermy and ventriloquism, expressing beliefs, dilemmas, and despairs current and, Heaven knows, continually articulate elsewhere. Meanwhile, somewhere outside, exist inarticulate joy and tears. With which the poet deals. Which he illuminates and awakens, when he can. (Aug. 7, 1937: 53)

This beautiful comparison of Millay's past and present work demonstrates the ardor with which Bogan advocates the expression of emotion in poetry. Poets create powerful poems only when they string together words in very particular sequences to help readers

understand the "inarticulate joy and tears" that lie just below the surface of the tangible, articulated world.

Bogan's affinity for deep emotion in verse also appears in a review of Federico Garcia Lorca's *Lament for the Death of a Bullfighter and Other Poems*, written during the same year as her harsh criticism of Millay's collection. Bogan's essay appears one year after Fascist forces in Spain burned Lorca's books in public squares, and she appreciates the power of the work to invoke concern from military regimes over its influence on the population. She writes, "These poems get at the nerve centres directly," and muses over their power to "give off heat, cold, and odor, expand and contract, glow and resound." The core of her argument appears in the compliment that through Lorca's work, "the heart of the reader . . . is made to feel" (Sept. 25, 1937: 72-73). The power of a poem to invigorate the human heart ultimately defines the piece, and allows the poem precedence over work that demonstrates intellectual acumen or technical brilliance but fails to elicit emotional reactions.

Bogan is generous with compliments for work she admires, and her praise of certain poets provides valuable clues to her attitudes during this phase of her career. But we may also consider her censuring remarks as equally enlightening. Bogan believes artists' inability to access and express emotional energies is one of the most devastating problems for twentieth-century poets, especially for those who practice experimental verse forms. She worries that poets have become so consumed with expressions of social or political ideas, or linguistic ornamentation, that they have lost the skill or inclination to move readers emotionally, to cause the kind of catharsis brought about by well-crafted,

beautiful verse. For Bogan, poetic achievement collapses when poets artificially embellish sentiment in what she calls "affected profundity." In the same 1932 review that contains her optimism about poetry's revival, she describes Conrad Aiken's *The Coming Forth by Day of Osiris Jones* as a "world of melancholy" laboriously conceived by the poet. She then somewhat sardonically writes:

> Yet, as his images become more recondite and fabulous, do his ideas become more profound? Have his latest books the true, peculiar beauty of his earlier ones, or, as he calls in more concepts, does not the fabric of his poetry appear monotonous and strained? You must decide this for yourselves. The merest touch of affected profundity puts me off. (Feb. 13, 1932: 62-63)

Clearly Bogan believes that poetry should penetrate the deepest recesses of human experience, but her concern here rests in poets' exclusive use of complex verse forms or obscure imagery to access those depths. Often simplicity of form and content can evoke mysteries of human existence much more beautifully than abstruse or fantastic patterns. And though she cautions readers to "decide . . . for [them]selves" about the efficacy of Aiken's work, her rhetorical question suggests that she has, in fact, already decided for us that the poems' "monotonous and strained" language damages the quality of the verse.

The disease of "affected profundity," though rampant in modern verse according to Bogan, does have its occasional remedy. She praises work she considers clear, precise, unpretentious, and unafraid to delve into darker, more negative aspects of modern life. Stephen Vincent Benet's 1936 book *Burning City* provides one example of poetry that Bogan feels counters the questionable sincerity of works like Aiken's. She finds Benet's lyrics "fresh and tender," and although they may not provoke any sort of catharsis, they do present sharp, pointed evaluations of how it feels to be alive during this century of

heightened modernity. "His sympathies are at bottom romantic, but he does not jib away from contemporary horrors . . . . If he is not profound, he is indubitably sincere, and better a thousand times poems touched with sentiment than poems contorted, dislocated, or stuffed" (June 20, 1936: 61). Here, as in other reviews of the period, Bogan's emphasis falls on a poem's ability to move readers emotionally, either toward joy or toward pain, and she disdains lyrics that might sound pleasing to the ear but do little to rouse the heart. For Bogan, the "horrors" of modern life are more effectively evoked through strength of emotion than through impressive lyric concoctions that neglect human feeling.

Bogan also tackles the problem of misused emotion in poetry through analysis of poems in which the emotion expressed is inappropriate to the subject studied. According to Bogan, superficial poetry comes from an exaggerated focus on intellect, and materializes when poets fail to incorporate sufficient emotion into the scenarios they describe. The poet may try to imbue his or her lyrics with passion, but when the poem's subject matter takes precedence over the emotion associated with it, the poem becomes bereft of humanity, and for Bogan, this deficiency renders the work meaningless. For example, although Bogan generally admires the work of Stephen Spender, her commentary on his poem "Vienna" presents her opinion on poets unable to establish a connection between subject and emotion. She writes:

> [I]f ever there was a poem which needed a certain amount of force to fuse its author's convictions with his subject matter, and failed to attain it, that poem is Stephen Spender's "Vienna." In the case of . . . Spender, the difficulty is not emotion in excess of, or even equal to, the subject, but rather the subject in excess of the emotion. What the young English need

> are fewer kestrels and railheads, and a fuller head of steam. (May 4, 1935: 66)

For Bogan, poets must concern themselves less with the bells and whistles (or "kestrels and railheads") of verse mechanics, and instead vitalize their work with genuine conviction. The weight of deep feeling should be apparent in the work as much as, if not more than, details of the thing described. Furthermore, a poem's meaning depends entirely on such depth of emotion, for if one aims solely to describe a particular subject in detail, Bogan would argue, why not write a critical analysis rather than a poem?

The work of Oscar Williams becomes the object of Bogan's deprecation for faults similar to those she finds in Spender's poem. In a 1940 review, her disparagement of Williams's *The Man Coming Toward You* becomes the venue for a sarcastic note of dissatisfaction with the state of modern consciousness in general. She writes, "All that was needed really to complete the picture of our peculiar times was a thoroughly synthetic poet. In Oscar Williams . . . that need has at last been supplied" (Apr. 20, 1940: 75). She delineates this statement by characterizing Williams's work as descriptive of simple, everyday images and actions that are presented in an unreasonably heightened state of torment. Williams's poetry, according to Bogan, can render objects as innocuous as a bird's song or flower as "so thoroughly repulsive that one looks with longing toward the comparative peace, cleanliness, and comfort offered by the violent ward in a mental hospital" (Apr. 20, 1940: 76). She calls Williams's worldview a "blown up approach to life and everything in it," echoing precisely the problem of subjects overwhelming the emotions expressed that she describes earlier in Spender's poem. For Bogan, a "synthetic poet" fails to express emotion even when writing about innately beautiful or powerful

subjects. They manufacture emotional response, rather than write into their poems a genuine experience of feeling that arises organically from the subject under consideration. When poets cannot access deep emotional energies, their poems become nothing but voids of pretty language that do nothing for the human heart.

Bogan fully expects poets to delve into the complexities of human experience without cowering under the immensity of the project at hand. She admires verse that tackles the dark side of human behavior, and admits profound disappointment when poets fail to accomplish the task she sets for them. Good poetry releases, rather than tethers, the enigmatic and often painful emotional, psychological, and spiritual qualities that comprise human life. Bogan finds, though, that oversimplification of these elements presents a significant problem in contemporary poetry. Bogan describes her worry in a 1933 review of David Morton's *Earth's Processional*, Wilbert Snow's *Down East*, and Frances Frost's *These Acres*.

> Mr. Snow, Mr. Morton, and Miss Frost write sincerely and with competence, yet their poetry, as a whole, leaves us unsatisfied. Is it because it has been written more with the ear than with the brain? Is it because they have not thoroughly realized that poetry is an art, that nature is savage and not to be trusted, and that we know too much and too little about the human heart to accept easy summings-up of its intricate workings? (Feb. 18, 1933: 63)

This short passage illustrates Bogan's anxiety about poets who, in her view, demonstrate little respect for the artistry and power essential to good poetry. For Bogan, these poets rely on their unchecked poetic ears while failing to acknowledge the infinite wilds of nature and of human nature. They cannot recognize their impotence to achieve complete control over these illimitable forces. Human emotional urges cannot be confined, tamed,

or dismissed; they must be embraced. Bogan believes that good poetry negotiates this process, and for this reason poets must do their work unafraid of indulging in powerful feeling.

Modern poetry, for Bogan, exhibits fundamental weaknesses that stultify its ability to affect the hearts and minds of readers. She believes that many poets of the 1930s have become detached from their own sensibilities of what is beautiful, what is full of love and joy, what consumes us in hate or rage, and what rends or makes whole the human heart. The emotional anxieties human beings endure each day should compel verse toward meaning, but many modern poets have become unable to access these feelings in ways that allow for catharsis. Though Bogan does not identify specific qualities of modern life that cause this detachment, she writes in 1934 that "contemporary poets are as incapable of wielding the barbed line as they are incapable, in the main, of feeling the high temper" (Apr. 7, 1934: 95). And she adds a few years later that poets now work "in a time made queer by, among other causes, its inability to face emotion and see it through" (Aug. 7, 1937: 51). Bogan begins with simple acknowledgement of insufficient emotional weight in modern poetry, but these comments later deepen and become the impetus for opinions on the deteriorating effects of modernity in general.

Well-written, powerful verse, according to Bogan, must propel a particular moment to its ultimate pitch of emotion, then guide the reader through that emotion until he or she can confront the implications and difficulties associated with those feelings. But one cannot rest with merely "facing" emotion; one must "see it through" past the crisis point to arrive at the serenity that ultimately follows. The antidote for modern

poetry's inability to confront emotional energy, Bogan believes, appears in the work of her hero, T.S. Eliot. In a 1936 analysis of Eliot's *Collected Poems*, Bogan traces the poet's evolution from pessimism about modernity, seen in poems such as "The Wasteland" and "Sweeney Agonistes," to his conclusions about modern life in the last poem of the collection, "Burnt Norton." She praises the last poem in that it "resolves on a note of balanced calm and even a mild sort of joy," and believes that Eliot elevates his poems above the horror he sees in modern consciousness to bring them instead toward the renewal of spirit needed in contemporary society. "He swung the balance over from whimpering Georgian bucolics to forms wherein contemporary complexity could find expression. The *Collected Poems* are more than a work of poetic creation; they are a work of poetic regeneration" (May 23, 1936: 78). The process of confronting emotions plays a critical role in Bogan's belief that "poetic regeneration" is possible through Eliot's work. Eliot's readers first experience feelings of profound disorder and negativity in the earlier poems, then, as they continue to process each poem, must confront those feelings until he or she achieves the "balanced calm" and "joy" that characterize the final poems in the book. For Bogan, movement from chaos to order becomes possible only when poetry guides readers through the emotional experience that accompanies each stage of the process.

Bogan appreciates complex verse forms and modish subjects, with the caveat that they must ultimately elicit emotion. She derides experimental poets, such as E.E. Cummings and Ezra Pound, for their advocacy of form over substance, going so far as to call Pound's *Cantos* "the most irritating poem in the English language" (July 15, 1933:

47). Yet Bogan does not denigrate experimental form and imagery indiscriminately; in fact, she quite admires poets who infuse strange verse with passionate feeling. One such admired poet is Edith Sitwell. Bogan writes in 1937 that "the lovely absurdity of her poetry" has often provided comfort "in high fever, on long train journeys, and in other morbid situations" (May 8, 1937: 70). The reviewer applauds Sitwell for refusing to acquiesce to rationalist critics who dislike her unusual metaphors and sensory images. "The clouds creaked and the sunlight whistled and whined in her poetry, she would say, because, to her, the clouds and the sunlight were thus vocal in Nature" (May 8, 1937:70). In addition to admiring the poet's fervor in defending her own poetry, Bogan finds satisfaction in Sitwell's bizarre imagery. She sees an emotional center in the poet's surrealist verse which evokes reactions from her readers in ways that other surrealist poets have not yet achieved.

> Edith Sitwell was a surrealist when the modern crop were babes in arms. She has created a completely individual universe, baroque and harlequinade, wherein all sorts of objects of art and nature shine and sound, lit up by extraordinarily melodramatic weather. And it is a tragic and acutely nostalgic universe, for there is human feeling in it, have no doubt of that. In fact, Miss Sitwell is almost alone among the artists of her particular school in being able to move the reader by her strange setups, as well as astonish them. (May 8, 1937: 70)

Because Sitwell infuses her "acutely nostalgic universe" with the power of passionate feeling, aspects of verse Bogan usually disdains become the impetus for praise of the poet's work.

Bogan continues to explore experimental verse in her laudatory review in 1938 of Kay Boyle's *A Glad Day*. She worries that some poets use exotic lyric styles to mask a dearth of genuine message. She writes, "The gifted writers work from the inside of the

form outward. The less gifted ones merely assume the form" (Oct. 22, 1938: 83). Poets who "work from the inside" access emotional centers to give substance to experimental forms. Kay Boyle appeals to Bogan because Boyle understands how form can expand understanding of the human experience beyond impressing readers with bizarre uses of language. "Miss Boyle is a born writer. She has a great talent for language, sharp sense, and what must be called, for lack of a better term, a rich subconscious . . . . When she is singing and expressing emotion and flashing about she is wonderful" (Oct. 22, 1938: 84). Boyle's ability to reveal her subconscious through uninhibited "singing" and "flashing about" proves delightful to Bogan's critical sensibilities, primarily because the poet does not sacrifice emotional content in pursuing linguistic or metrical experiments.

During the end of this stage of her career, Bogan expresses her thoughts on one of the most celebrated poets of the early twentieth century. W.H. Auden impresses Bogan with beautiful works which incorporate strength of feeling as a critical part of the work's meaning. But though she greatly admires Auden's poetry, she does not grant unconditional praise, for she finds much of the poet's early work unconvincing. Bogan's 1940 review of Auden's *Another Time* reveals her affinities for and disappointments with the poet's work thus far in his career. She finds that Auden's current collection demonstrates more variety in tone and subject than earlier books, and his growth as an artist appears in revisions to the previously-published poem "Spain 1937." But for Bogan, although Auden "has been a virtuoso for years" he has not yet fully matured as an artist.

> But the poet is not yet all of a piece, the development, naturally, is still going on. Auden is weakest in a statement of direct personal intensity.

> His love poems tend to become metaphysical. And his "light" verse, as opposed to Eliot's (which can be magnificent), often turns out to be both childish and cruel. (Feb. 24, 1940: 69)

Auden's work proves no exception to Bogan's general rule regarding the importance of emotional intensity in verse, but this review also intimates a shift away from her allegiance to unencumbered emotional expression in poetry. This subtle change appears later in the review as she analyzes Auden's "In Memory of Sigmund Freud," included in the "Occasional Poems" section of *Another Time*. She calls the poem "the finest Auden has produced," and continues, "here the poet is completely in his poem. He is feeling emotion without shame, he is analyzing with skill a great man's contribution to modern thought" (Feb. 24, 1940: 69). Though Bogan again praises the poet's unrestrained expression of intense feeling, the next clause notes the poem's analytical view of the famed psychiatrist. Bogan's earlier reviews might not have included this last clause, thus recognizing the poem's emotive qualities while omitting mention of its analytical nature. Bogan's emphasis on the intellectual as well as the emotional character of the work render the two equally significant, in her opinion, to the success of the poem.

During the next phase of Bogan's career as critic, the trend toward praising the analytical will continue; where she once applauded emotional intensity, she now also offers evaluations on the strength of intellect demonstrated by the work. Perhaps as her personal life becomes even more plagued with depression and creative despair during the next decade of her life, the resulting emotional turmoil awakens her affinity for the processes of rational thought. This change proves significant in the context of the ongoing argument over Bogan's own use of poetry either to reveal or conceal

overwhelming emotional energies. Reviews written during the 1940s illustrate a dramatic increase in her appreciation for emotional restraint in verse. Poetry for Bogan becomes less "the unique sound of the individual exploring all emotion" (Dec. 28, 1940: 62), and more an examination through language of the intellectual mind battling with the feeling heart.

Chapter 3: The Reign of Intellect: 1941-1948

Louise Bogan often suffered through periods during which the ability to write poetry abandoned her. This creative despair resulted in moody, depressed behavior that affected her private and public life, and her longest sustained depression, lasting from 1941 until 1948, brought a period of poetic silence that many critics believe threatened to silence the poet permanently. In 1941, Bogan's *Poems and New Poems* appeared on the scene to mixed reviews. Marianne Moore, Stanley Kunitz and others found brilliance in the new collection, but a scathing review by Mary Colum in the *New York Times Review of Books* contributed to the book's poor commercial performance (Frank 319). Public demand for high lyric poetry like Bogan's had waned in recent years and the book sold only about 400 copies. As a result, Scribners, Bogan's longtime publisher, denied her next proposal to edit an anthology of lyric poems. After the rejection, Bogan broke with Scribners, and had trouble finding a new publisher until 1954 when Noonday Press printed her *Collected Poems: 1923-1953*. Bogan began to accept the fact that formal lyric verse was losing its audience, and as a result her pessimism over the state of modern poetry deepened. She felt slighted by the reading public and by academia, and to make matters worse, by 1948 all of her poetry had gone out of print.

During these years, Bogan was unable to compose new poems that might have countered her depressed state, and perhaps as a result of this creative impotence, her artistic sensibilities took a turn toward the analytical. Her personal journals became much less meditative and more filled with various lists, telephone numbers, or succinct summaries of the day's events. She also refused numerous magazines and journals when

they wrote to commission new poems, and instead focused her energies on critical prose. To augment her rationalist turn of mind, she began to act as editor for poet and friend William Maxwell during the early 1940s, and by the mid-40s was working under Archibald MacLeish at the Library of Congress on various poetry-cataloging projects. This period of heightened rationalism and diminished creative inspiration lasted until an auspicious conversation took place between Bogan and T.S. Eliot, the poet Bogan most admired, at the 1948 meeting of the Fellows in American Letters. The two talked about life, literature, and art, and in weeks to come Bogan wrote of her enchantment with Eliot as an artist and as a man. She was inspired, and after the meeting went home to pen the first draft of the lovely and nostalgic "Song for the Last Act" (Frank 334-43). Her dry spell was over.

Though Bogan had trouble composing verse of her own during the 1940s, she continued employment at *The New Yorker* reviewing the poetry of her contemporaries. Coterminous with her new focus on the analytical, Bogan's analyses shift from examinations of poetry's ability to affect the heart, seen in her work in the 1930s, to its ability to impress the mind through cognitive understanding of human emotions. Her examinations also become less forgiving of poets who lack intellectual acumen but write genuine feeling into their work. Sentiment becomes a weakness in the poetic form that can only be overcome through strength of reason and understanding, not through power of feeling. In the context of the ongoing debate over Bogan's emotional poetics, one might conclude that during this phase of her career she celebrates the restraint of emotional energies, and it is possible that this new interest in controlling emotion leads

directly to her inability to compose verse of her own. Though her poetic silence during this time may allow for an accurate estimation of this connection, the relative absence of verse by which to judge the matter causes difficulty in accurately. But close examination of her reviews indicates that during this time her prose, rather than her poetry, becomes the venue by which she explores uses of emotion in verse; whereas she once praised poetry for its emotional depth, she now scrutinizes it for intellectual rigor.

Because of Bogan's new concentration on the inherent cognition evident in poetry, her reviews contain increased analysis of poetic craftsmanship as she considers formal qualities of verse more frequently than in the 1930s. The trend we saw in her 1940 review of Auden continues into the next year when she writes about his book *The Double Man*. Bogan does not dismiss the significance of emotional pitch in verse, but she begins to incorporate structural and linguistic concerns to augment analysis of emotional intensity. Her review of Auden's work illustrates the movement toward discourse on form, and shows that her emphasis on emotion in poetry greatly decreases. She introduces the collection as follows:

> W.H. Auden, in his new book, "The Double Man," has cleared a lot away, including much of his former self. He returns to the nice, crisp, open beat of four-stress iambic lines and to the couplets of the letter in rhyme, and he has reduced modern wisdom (of which there is some) to the simple proposition that Man is not perfect, or perhaps even perfectible; he must, however, keep going and try to do the best he can" (Apr. 12, 1941: 83)

Bogan whittles away all superfluous imaginings about emotion or meaning to draw attention to the metrical structure of Auden's work, emphasizing the author's construction of the poem rather than the poem's effect on the reader. Rhyme and meter become the first order of business, the second being a pithy summation of the work's

overarching themes. This passage not only shows Bogan's move toward analysis of formal aspects of poetry, but it also illustrates another, perhaps more subtle change then taking place in Bogan's reviews. She begins to write with a sense of impatience, as if hurrying toward succinct interpretation and shying away from the complexities of human experience the poems might express. She reduces the whole of Auden's work to a simple statement about man's need to "keep going" even though his imperfections can erect barriers that seem insurmountable. She avoids commentary about the poem's emotive or spiritual qualities; indeed, consideration of readers' emotional reactions does not appear at all in this review.

Bogan continues to emphasize form later the same year in a review of the poem *The Broken Span* by William Carlos Williams. She examines Williams's use of experimental poetic forms, and she culminates the review by calling Williams "one of the finest lyric poets of our day." Her approbation, however, has little to do with the poet's ability to express emotional energies. Rather, the review centers on formal verse elements to support her endorsement of the work.

> Williams is, and has been for over twenty years, an "experimental" poet. He has consistently written in the "free verse" which is now as dead and dated as *art nouveau*. He has, however, kept this rather flaccid vehicle truly free, fresh, and firm, never forgetting that it can have a formal excellence of its own. Free verse must be based on a sharp reporting eye and ear, and Williams is as perceptive now as he ever has been. He has solved in his own way the problem of getting the modern scene into short poetic form. (May 17, 1941: 79)

Bogan's earlier reviews would have at least mentioned what other critics have noted, that is, the lack of serious emotional content of Williams's work, and though she might have approved of the short imagist style of poetry, she would certainly have admonished the

poet against ignoring depths of human feeling. She acknowledges that imagist verse can have "formal excellence," and that a "reporting eye and ear" can express the sensibilities of modernism just as well, if not better, than a poem of emotional weight. In this review, depth of perception, not of emotion, becomes the primary requirement for a successful poem. Bogan's syntax indicates that Williams's perceptual abilities relate directly to his "reporting eye and ear," *not* to his feeling heart. Thus, perception becomes an activity of the brain, an intellectual catalogue of sensory stimuli that does not require an emotional response to validate its findings. In this review, emotion becomes a secondary form of interpreting one's surroundings, and enters the picture only after a world has already been perceived and interpreted by the intellect. Bogan's comments on Williams's poetry indicate her evolution toward exploration of the cognitive sources that underlie human emotional response.

We also see the extent to which Bogan shifts her emphasis toward formal elements of poetry in her 1941 review of Marianne Moore's *What Are Years*. Bogan delights in the intricate patterns Moore constructs, and focuses her entire review on form. She writes, "Miss Moore's poems are at once extraordinarily formal and infinitely full of surprise, design, and even arabesque." She then applauds Moore's "meticulously drawn" images of the natural world, rendering the poet's methodical descriptions as resting "on the closest observation." She continues, "But Miss Moore, if she belongs to the rococo tradition at all, belongs to its upper level, where classic form saves all and the embellishment is not foolish but full of meaning and delight" (Nov. 1, 1941: 71). Bogan's praise of the poet's work so far contains no mention of emotional content, or

even weight of subject matter. Instead, she grants Moore's lyric designs as the crucial element in giving the poems "meaning and delight."

> She is saved not only by her form but by her imaginative richness, her conservative yet humane way of thought, and by her humor, which is brisk and dry. She has the power of drawing dissimilar products of nature and art . . . . She seeks out wonders of all sorts, not to make them monstrous, in the manner of the surrealists, but to place them in nature (where, of course, they belong) . . . . They become symbols in the deepest sense; they have the power to move as well as interest us. Her poems leave a lasting and evocative pattern in the mind. (Nov. 1, 1941: 72)

The rhetoric in this short passage revolves almost entirely around workings of the poet's mind – Moore's imagination, her ability to connect objects in nature and in art, and her creation of poetic symbols. Bogan's concept of imagination seems intimately connected to intellectual activity and to the conscious formulation into language of abstract sensory experience. Imaginative activity for Bogan relies primarily on cognition to achieve its goals, and less on direct emotional reaction to the subjects discussed. Bogan does note, however, that Moore's symbolism has "the power to move as well as interest us." The reviewer signifies the poem's emotive qualities here, but the next sentence relates these elements to a "pattern in the mind" left with the reader. For Bogan, Moore's poetry "moves" readers by leaving a "lasting" impression on the intellect rather than by arousing passionate feelings in the heart.

Although Bogan's criticism now centers more on intellectual processes, perception, and formal considerations than on strength of feeling, it would overstate the issue to say she altogether disregards poetry's ability to move readers emotionally. Indeed, she vacillates between using rhetoric about cognitive ability and the language of emotionalism, perhaps illustrating an internal debate she struggles to resolve. Two

reviews written in 1942 about Karl Shapiro's work reveal this inner discourse. The first provides commentary on a selection of Shapiro's poems in the anthology *Five Young American Poets: Second Series, 1941*. Bogan interprets Shapiro's verse as descriptions of the quotidian, avoiding grandiloquent statements about society or the state of humanity. Bogan quotes the preface to this anthology where Shaprio writes about his work, "The reader will see that I write about myself, my house, my street, and my city, and not about 'America,' the word that is chief enemy of modern poetry" (Mar. 7, 1942: 55). Shapiro details the tangible world, the specifics that give substance to lofty ideas about nationalism, modernity, or spirituality. In effect, his poetry articulates the sensory world to expose imperceptible elements of human experience that might otherwise go undetected. Bogan says of Shapiro:

> He believes, that is, in the worth of the concrete and the individual as against the glitter of the abstraction. He writes about the public park, the drugstore, the automobile accident, the fun of driving a new Buick. He casts an ironic eye on the movies, Washington Cathedral, the State of Virginia and its university, Poe's legend, a cemetery. (Mar. 7, 1942: 55)

Shapiro's work values the concrete over the abstract, the commonplace over the noteworthy. He reveals the sights and sounds of everyday existence, and allows readers to feel nostalgia, regret, pain, or joy completely of their own accord. The poems, for Bogan, lack the intense emotional content that she would have favored during the first part of her career, yet now she praises the poet precisely for his restraint in avoiding excess feeling. In Shapiro's poetry, "economic truths about class distinction, even among the dead, are revealed, but how imaginatively, with what penetration and restraint!" (Mar. 7, 1942: 55) Bogan's concern focuses entirely on the poet's ability to introduce readers

to new ways of perceiving ordinary encounters, and excludes from her discussion the need for emotional responses to those encounters. She even uses the word "restraint" in approbation here, as if she views emotional release as contrary to the practices of a good poet. Instead of a focus on emotional content, Bogan notes Shapiro's lyric control in granting his subjects autonomy from sentiment forced on them by either poet or reader.

The next year, while Shapiro was on active duty in World War II, his publisher released his book *Person, Place, and Thing*, which includes many of the poems Bogan favorably reviews in the *Five Young American Poets* anthology. She continues her admiration of Shapiro's lyrics, but in this review grants a bit more consideration to the poems' emotional weight. She believes Shapiro meets three conditions required of good poets: "an eye that sees, a mind with the power of judging, and a feeling heart" (Jan. 9, 1943: 45). Unlike other reviews of the early 1940s in which the poet's "feeling heart" receives minimum attention, Bogan lauds the poet's ability to infuse the ordinary with uncommon emotional insight.

> It is not too difficult to size up the poorer aspects of education and religion . . . . What is more difficult is to see the tragic side of the almost invisible ordinary and to take hold of the almost ungraspable usual: the pathos of moving day, the sadness of the Midnight Show, and the shabby servitudes and grandeurs of Hollywood, the honky-tonk, and the drugstore. (Jan. 9, 1943: 45-6)

The reviewer recognizes Shapiro's acumen in perceiving the world at large, and appreciates his ability to compose verse that reveals subtle emotional qualities of his subjects. For Bogan, Shapiro's infusion of deep feeling into the commonplace represents one of the poet's greatest accomplishments. She distinguishes him from poets who write verse as if creating some sort of cerebral puzzle, and admires his refusal to conform to

conventions in form, style, and content. In this review, Bogan recalls the days when she considered emotional weight the primal force that compels good poetry. Even with her more analytical mindset, she cannot ignore poetry's power to combine intense feeling and rational thought. In fact, she uses this review as a forum for an internal debate over the poetics of emotional expression. First she lauds Shapiro's ability to write feeling into common aspects of everyday life, then notes the significance of Shapiro subjecting "social notions . . . to some fundamental brainwork of his own." And she quotes an unnamed French critic's view that the aim of lyric poetry is not to delude the public with abstraction, but "to distinguish reality with a clear and piecing look" (Jan. 9, 1943: 45). Bogan struggles to resolve the dichotomy between verse that explores the emotional nature of human experience, and verse that articulates a sober and rational perspective on the world. Shapiro's poetry unifies this paradox in a way that causes Bogan to vacillate between the two modes of thought.

Though in this review Bogan discusses expression of both mind and heart, her critical focus during the 1940s rests overwhelmingly on the side of intellectual concerns, so that form, style, subject, and depth of thought take precedence over feeling and weight of emotion. Yet we have also seen that she does not entirely dismiss evaluations of sentiment. Several reviews indicate her need to insert brief commentary on a poet's capacity for emotion even in essays otherwise dominated by intellectual concerns. These perfunctory comments on emotional content, though, appear as afterthoughts to her main critical focus. A 1944 review of Kenneth Patchen, George Barker, and Dunstan Thompson provides an example of her tendency to gloss over emotive aspects of poems.

She first analyzes the rhetorical technique, or, for Bogan, the lack thereof, in Kenneth Patchen's *Cloth of the Tempest*. "He is non-horrifying; his writing is nearer a child's talk than a nervous patient's free association. He sometimes, again childishly, prefers to express his idea by a rough sketch rather than to put it through the routine of speech" (Feb. 26, 1944: 82). The review, obviously, is a negative one, and she consistently disparages Patchen's immature use of language and inability to formulate powerful associations through rhetorical expression. Yet, in the very last sentence, she sardonically writes, "But if you do not wish to tax mind or emotions while enjoying a run with language as language, Patchen may interest you" (Feb. 26, 1944: 82). This sarcastic note of disparagement contains the only mention of emotion in her analysis of Patchen's collection, offering only a cursory mention of depth of feeling, and syntactically linking "mind" and "emotions" in a way that discourages readers from considering "emotion" independent from the poem's impact on the intellect.

Similarly, Bogan offers a brief, superficial treatment of emotion at the end of her review of George Barker's *Sacred and Secular Elegies*. She admires Barker's lyricism, stating, "He has an innate feeling for the sound of words, for delightful assonance between vowels and harmonious collisions between consonants." But later in the review she derides the poet for his failure to connect with the subjects in his poems. "He is dealing . . . with reality, although at about a ninth remove, and shimmerings of actual people and events show through the verbiage from time to time" (Feb. 26, 1944: 82-83). As with Patchen, Bogan's rather sarcastic examination of Barker's work introduces emotion only at the very end of her comments. "He is full of emotion and given to a sort

of suppressed religious enthusiasm. His intellectual orientation to his material, as the textbooks put it, is, however, rather weak" (Feb. 26, 1944: 84). Here again Bogan writes only a slight reference to emotion into one sentence amid a review that centers instead on formal and linguistic concerns. And immediately after she mentions emotion, Bogan evaluates the "intellectual orientation" Barker exhibits. Bogan offers no substantive opinion on Barker's depth of feeling or his ability to elicit emotions from readers; rather, she glosses over the subject to center her commentary on the poet's mind.

In the final section of her review, Bogan grants Dunstan Thomson's *Poems* a detailed rhetorical analysis, but again provides only brief mention of emotional content. She begins by examining Thompson's understanding of modern poetic trends.

> He knows their ingredients, their derivation, and their exact degree of fashion. His poems . . . scamper away with all prizes for virtuosity. He understands how to distort a sonnet, how to pepper up an ode, how to bring back outworn mythological figures, rigged out, as it were, in dominoes and ball gowns, when and where to drop the word of argot, how to manage some Elizabethan grandiloquence, how to compress in the manner of Hopkins or color up with Wallace Stevens affectations – he has it all at his finger ends. (Feb. 26, 1944: 84)

Bogan seems playful in this review, conjuring metaphors to describe Thompson's ability to outwit the work of other poets, and emphasizing his ability to manipulate language into the very poetic trends he attempts to subvert. But only at the end of the review does Bogan attempt any analysis of emotional content commentary. "Thompson has hardly any ear, but his visual faculty works well. And often his emotion seems real, if inflated and sentimentalized" (Feb. 26, 1944: 84). Here again Bogan only glosses over emotion and instead focuses her analysis on "virtuosity" of technique and cognitive understanding of poetic forms and trends.

Though this three-part review demonstrates Bogan's allegiance to intellectual concerns, it also illustrates a mild dissatisfaction with her emphasis on intellect. Readers can sense, even amid somewhat biting derision, Bogan's inherent affinity for deep emotion in poetry, an affinity that she seems to suppress during this phase of her career. She centers her reviews during the 1940s on intellect, rhetoric, and style, but cannot help expressing her belief that poetry must also provide the voice that cries out in both delight and horror in response to genuine human experience. This hint of dissatisfaction will eventually result, as will be seen in the next chapter, in a return to emphasis on emotive qualities of verse.

Toward the end of the 1940s, Bogan shifts her emphasis on intellect and rhetoric to advocacy of the "realistic" in poetry. Poetry that relies on sensory images to give material substance to their lyrics, for Bogan, indicates a strong connection between meaning and the metaphors used to communicate that meaning. Poetry must evoke the solid ground over the mist of clouds, the tangible world over the ethereal. Bogan's 1946 review of Elizabeth Bishop's *North and South* illustrates her increased appreciation for concrete imagery. She begins with a commendation for Bishop's no-nonsense approach to composing verse.

> Miss Bishop's poems, moreover, are not in the least bit showy. They strike no attitudes and have not an ounce of superfluous emotional weight, and they combine an unforced ironic humor with a naturalist's accuracy of observation, for Miss Bishop, although she frequently writes fantasy, is firmly in touch with the real world and takes a Thoreaulike interest in whatever catches her attention. (Oct. 5, 1946: 122)

Bogan appreciates Bishop's straightforward employment of images and sensation, along with her omission of personal feeling when unrelated to meaning. The two most striking

statements in Bogan's analysis, that Bishop's poetry contains no "superfluous emotional weight" and "is firmly in touch with the real world," would probably not have appeared in reviews of the 1930s that accented emotive qualities of verse. Here, though, Bogan praises the poet for accessing the world beyond "attitudes" and mere "fantasy." She admires Bishop's almost scientific "accuracy of observation" as granting her access to the "real world" that the poet must explore.

Bogan also composes in 1946 a long, detailed analysis of Robert Lowell's *Lord Weary's Castle*. She believes Lowell's conversion from New England Calvinism to Roman Catholicism informs much of his work in this collection. His poetry continues the struggle evident in seventeenth-century consciousness between human faith, which is for Bogan an emotional construct, and reason, which represents the intellect. This internal battle addresses the same dichotomy Bogan attempts to resolve for herself through her reviews. Lowell's poetry appeals to Bogan because "a tremendous struggle is . . . going on in [his] difficult and harsh writings, and nothing is resolved" (Nov. 30, 1946: 129). She writes that Lowell's work shows "fierce indignation" with modernity and its shallow materialism, and evokes "Puritan hellfire" in his dark lyrics. Although Lowell might desire to seclude himself from the deteriorating effects of modern life, Bogan sees that he confronts the darkness with full force, having "not taken refuge anywhere" (Nov. 30, 1946: 129). Lowell's unabashed efforts to resolve the battle between reason and faith, between mind and heart, garners Bogan's supreme praise. She concludes:

> Lowell may be the first of that postwar generation which will write in dead earnest, not content with providing merely a slick superficiality but

> attempting to find a basis for a working faith, in spite of secretive Nature and in defiance of the frivolous concepts of a gross and complacent society. Or he may simply remain a solitary figure. Certainly his gifts are of a special kind. (Nov. 30, 1946: 129-30)

This brief passage clearly indicates Bogan's admiration for Lowell. But I would argue that it also uses Lowell's verse as a template for Bogan's own creative attempts in which she searches for this "basis for a working faith," not a religious faith, but a faith in her own artistic nature, in her alternate tendencies to spill emotion onto the page and to surrender those feelings to rational thought. The struggle Bogan scholars see in her poetry appears alive and well in her prose – she views the crisis of faith Lowell writes into his poetry as a reflection of the battle between emotion and intellect she works out for herself in her reviews. Bogan firmly believes that verse has the power to resolve anxieties about the nature of spiritual and emotional consciousness, but during this time she is unable to access her own "special kind" of creative energy enough to do so.

Bogan's reviews consistently reflect a profound contemplation of her own poetics, and during the 1940s, perhaps resulting from her own creative silence and personal depression, her affinities lean emphatically toward the intellect. But we will see that during the next phase of her career she further explores ways to integrate depth of feeling with strength of mind, a trend that will continue until her retirement in the 1960s. Her initial attempts to bring emotional expression back into the discussion appear in a 1947 review of volumes by John Frederick Nims and Stephen Spender. Her evaluations of each poet weigh emotional intensity as a primary factor in determining the value of his poems. For example, Bogan cares little for Nims's *The Iron Pastoral* overall. She writes that "his work is so saturated with the turns of modern verbalism that picking out his true

poetic responses to reality requires an effort that approximates hard physical labor" (Apr. 5, 1947: 96). Even though she dislikes the collection and the artificiality of Nims's verse, the poet's one redeeming quality rests in his expression of real emotion. Bogan notes, "He is almost always over-ornate and many times affected, but a real quiver of emotion runs through his mannerisms . . . . He strains to produce effects, and it is a pity that so much effort often results in nothing but masses of stunted and contorted language" (Apr. 5, 1947: 96). Nims's primary fault does not rest in his lack of substance, but in his ineffectual attempts to elicit emotional reactions from readers. The poet cannot make up for dearth of emotive content with intellectual tricks of style Bogan might have praised in her concentrations on form during the early- and mid-1940s.

In the same way, her commentary on Stephen Spender's *Poems of Dedication* centers much more on strength of feeling than intellectual acumen or formal excellence. For Bogan, Spender addresses with courage subjects that modern poets too often neglect, such as "irrevocable loss, the horrors of physical disease and death, and the darkness and terror in human love" (Apr. 5, 1947: 97). Bogan appreciates Spender's tenacious entry into the dark recesses of the human heart, and grants that though she often finds the collection "uneven" in style and tone, "there are moments . . . when his language reveals some great intensity in his feeling." She adds, "These moments broaden our field of vision as nothing but a sincere voice joined to true imaginative power can" (Apr. 5, 1947: 97). Bogan cannot ignore emotion that arises from the processes of the human spirit, and cannot ignore the power those feelings have when expressed in well-written verse. During the next phase of her career, we will see that Bogan again explores the emotional

nature of powerful verse, but she more closely considers intellectual processes crucial in crafting lyrics that successfully reveal the passionate emotional energies comprising human experience. Her allegiance to emotion in the 1930s and to intellect in the 1940s will, by the end of her career, coalesce into advocacy for integration of the two modes of expression.

Chapter 4: Thought and Emotion Fused: 1949-1968

Poetry permeated Louise Bogan's life even when she herself was not publishing any verse. She wrote poetry criticism, edited the work of her contemporaries, gave lectures about poetry, and, as noted earlier, for a time worked at the Library of Congress cataloguing poetry. But Bogan's professional life during the 1950s was largely consumed with her newfound love of teaching. She accepted her first university position in 1948 at the request of Theodore Roethke, who coordinated an invitation for her to teach a summer session in poetry at the University of Washington. In 1949, she taught for a semester at the University of Chicago, and thereafter spent the next sixteen years teaching at several other American universities. She strove to impress on her students the importance of form and rhythm in verse, often beginning courses by having students concentrate on the variegated rhythms that compose life – the heartbeat, breathing, walking. Along with form, she emphasized poetry's inextricable connection to human emotional depths. She once told one of her students, "Keep your *abstract* thought for the prose, your *emotions* for the poetry" (Frank 346).

Bogan's previous battles with depression and jealous rage had largely subsided by the 1950s. In her letters and journal entries written during this time, she reminisces about the painful experiences of her youth, as if to distance herself from them through the lens of time. Much of her energies were spent with her students or working on her critical prose, but in 1952 Bogan also found herself again publishing poetry. She sent the poem "After the Persian" to her friend Karl Shapiro who included it in the fortieth-anniversary issue of the journal *Poetry*. This event seemed to spark a creative revival for her, and

over the next two decades Bogan produced several new poems that eventually appeared in *Blue Estuaries*. In 1954, Noonday Press published her *Collected Poems: 1923-1953*, and the next year a compilation of her critical works called *Selected Criticism: Poetry and Prose*. Overall, the first half of the 1950s proved a period of relative calm for Bogan. She had settled into her newly established teaching career, and her poetry again garnered attention from a literary world that had largely ignored her verse for two decades.

During the late 1950s and early 1960s, Bogan seemed situated to spend her final years in serenity. She gave poetry readings and wrote criticism for literary journals and magazines, and she began a long-term teaching appointment in 1964 at Brandeis University. In addition, Western College for Women gave her an honorary doctorate in 1956. Despite these successes in her professional life, Bogan began to descend again into depression. She withdrew from social activities, experienced panic attacks for which she took anti-depressants that caused painful physical side effects, and in 1965 checked herself into a neurological institute in hopes of alleviating her psychological and physical suffering (Frank 397). Not surprisingly, her poetic voice returned during this time in full force, and she completed the last group of poems that appear in her final collected works, titled *The Blue Estuaries: Poems 1928-1968*. Yet even in the midst of psychological suffering, as always, Bogan continued writing for *The New Yorker*.

Bogan's reviews for *The New Yorker* written during the early 1950s echo the meditative tone of her personal journals. She no longer appears as the volatile young woman spilling emotion onto the page in the 1930s, nor as the silenced poet shunning emotional expression in the 1940s. Rather, we see a mature woman moving toward

resolving the dichotomy that had pervaded her personal and professional life. She writes extensively about poetry's ability to communicate human emotional depths, as if to balance her previous emphasis on the intellect. But she now requires a much more analytical approach to writing emotion into poetry. Poets must scrutinize their feelings and render them with ultimate precision only after careful examination of the type of human experience they want to represent.

During the last ten years of her career, her rhetoric further illustrates a dissolution of the differences between emotive and analytical poetry that were once prominent features of her critical attitudes. Poems become, for Bogan, vehicles by which a poet's thoughts and feelings coalesce into one organic unit. Rather than segregating these aspects of human experience, poetry crystallizes them into a single, unified form. Bogan scholars have thus far neglected this reflective stage of Bogan's career, an omission due primarily to exclusive focus on her poetry, which she did not produce in great quantities toward the end of her career. Yet her reviews indicate an organic and peaceful conclusion to the internal discourse between emotion and reason as she continues to explore the emotive nature of verse.

Bogan returns to a full-scale appreciation of emotion in poetry in a 1949 review of Rosalie Moore's *The Grasshopper's Man* and Herbert Cahoon's first collection, *Thanatopsis*. The review reads as a cautionary exposition on the mistakes and accomplishments of modern experimental verse, concentrating primarily on formal analysis. Although Bogan had often shown disdain for experimentation in verse for its own sake, she now begins by recognizing its literary importance. "It is reasonable to

believe . . . that the poetic field, after almost forty years of intensive experimentation in all languages, has been practically cleared of its impressive nineteenth-century rubbish" (Nov. 26, 1949: 126). She adds that though this clearing of the poetic playing field has been significant, it is now "important that fewer acrobatics and more hard-handed cultivation occur in the space that has thus been cleared" (Nov. 26, 1949:127). She then grants each poet reviewed an analysis of his or her respective achievements in replacing the "cleared space" with "hard-handed" substantive content rather than stylistic ornamentation. In the context of this critical pattern, Bogan examines the Imagist writing style in Moore's *The Grasshopper Man.* Instead of discussing only types of imagery or rhetorical strategies employed by Imagists, Bogan brings comments on emotional expression into her discussion of form.

> [Moore] proceeds from sensory images offered by experience toward reflection. This is, of course, an imagist procedure, and her faults are those of an enlarged Imagism. But in Imagism . . . the range and depth of sensibility are not all. If these are not backed up by a variety of insights and emotions, the effect upon the reader (or the spectator) will be stifling as well as baffling. (Nov. 26, 1949: 128)

Bogan returns to an emphasis on the critical role emotion plays in the success of poetry, even for poets in the Imagist tradition who appreciate the subject itself without adding superfluous poetic commentary. But for Bogan, even poems using imagery in isolation should carry a weight of insightful emotion behind their construction. Bogan views Moore's "faults" as arising primarily out of the dearth of real "insights and emotions," and complains that because she writes little personal feeling into the poems, they become monotonous and plagued with a "sameness of vision" that the poet cannot escape (Nov. 26, 1949: 128).

Bogan's analysis of Cahoon's *Thanatopsis* contains the same consideration of emotion that we find in her examination of Moore. In Cahoon's case, though, she argues that the poet infuses his "simple, cool, and pellucid" lyrics with a depth of emotion that saves his work from becoming trite or overly distanced from reality. She writes, "Nature and human emotions remain his materials, and he writes of these with an original sense of words" (Nov. 26, 1949: 128-29). Her previous warning about the flaws inherent in experimental verse arises from her belief that the form of a poem must have emotional and intellectual depth to attain meaning. Bogan fears that experimentation for its own sake will render poetry ineffectual. For her, the value of poetic experimentation has been exhausted; therefore, poets must infuse their work with substantive content to fill the gap left by exclusive concentration on form. This review continually discusses content in the context of emotional expression. Moore lacks the emotive depth to give her experimental verse power, whereas Cahoon's ability to write feelings into his work saves it from mere "simple, cool" impotence. This review demonstrates an initial synthesis of two earlier views regarding Bogan's poetics of emotional expression. She now appreciates more than the emotive power a poem creates or the intellectual activity a poem engages, and instead turns her critical eye toward impressions a thoughtful poem makes on the heart.

A review Bogan writes in May of 1950 demonstrates that her critical perception swings back toward advocacy of emotional energy as the moving force of poetry. She begins the review with the declaration that mid-century presents a perfect opportunity for "stocktaking and evaluation" of twentieth-century poetry. In her literary "stocktaking," Bogan evaluates her own critical viewpoints as they have developed over two decades,

and also considers modern poets according to the tenets of her advocacy of emotion in verse. Her analysis starts by envisioning a mature modern poetry that effectively frames emotional energy within stylistic techniques (free verse or otherwise).

> We may currently ask, for example, which poets are authentically modern and which are merely utilizing modern techniques in order to disguise emotional poverty, intellectual blankness, or a faded and outmoded point of view. And we are able . . . to draw up at least a partial list of those qualities that distinguish a mature art in any time or place. A mature poetry is vigorous, flexible, varied, and open. Under not more than the light pressure of this convention or that, the poet can operate freely at all levels. He can note every fact without strain and express every emotion without embarrassment . . . . The good modern poet is "on to himself" and is therefore capable of a wide variety of insights and a wide range of feeling. His craft, moreover, has reached a high point of technical development; he has the means to express what he feels . . . . The modern poet, therefore, must have real emotions and the courage and energy to deal with them. (May 20, 1950: 113)

This passage illustrates a profound alteration in her critical attitudes in previous decades. Here emotion becomes the central component in formulating opinions on modern verse. She mentions "intellectual blankness" as a characteristic of some contemporary poets, and she touches on the role of form and technique in the craft, but both of these elements pale in comparison to her emphasis on emotional expression. Bogan seems to recall her opinions in the 1930s, and again assumes the voice of a passionate, intense, emotionally energetic writer who believes deeply in the power of human feelings to empower artistic creation. It is no surprise that Bogan's own poetic silence ends just as her critical views return to advocacy of emotional expression. Just as she claims flexibility and openness are essential elements of good modern poetry, her critical prose becomes open and flexible in its language and tone. She now returns to her element, no longer struggling to

force highly-developed intellectual or technical considerations into her reviews, and instead indulging more in her natural affinity for passionate expression.

Yet Bogan does not blindly opine her admiration for unabashed displays of emotion. In fact, she still holds the lucid eye of the reviewer as she evaluates "mature" poets according to her criteria. At this point in her career, Bogan has developed finely tuned attitudes about the shape emotional energy should take. Emotions must be carefully considered before written into verse. They must be feelings tempered by reason, appropriate to subject and circumstance, and they cannot fall either too heavily into gloom, or too lightly into sentimentality. For example, in the same May 1950 review she compares Robert Nathan's *The Green Leaf* with E.E. Cummings's *Xaipe: Seventy-one Poems* in terms of each poet's method of writing emotion. For Bogan, both poets fail; neither achieves the emotive precision needed to empower his verse.

> Nathan frequently deals with the tragic facts of civilization in detail, but he never becomes openly enraged; he shrouds these facts with a diffused gloom . . . . Cummings is much more forthright; he gives mankind up as a bad job . . . . Nathan is troubled by change; Cummings never gives in to melancholy emotions of any kind. It is this deletion of the tragic that make Cummings' joy childish and his anger petulant . . . to rejoice with Cummings is to rejoice in an incomplete world, just as to despair with Nathan is to despair in a sentimental one. (May 20, 1950: 114)

Poetry, for Bogan, should not merely explore one's feelings about any particular matter. The poet should have already analyzed and dissected his or her emotions before composing a word of verse. Poets who fail to scrutinize each emotional reaction inevitably fall into the trap of over-simplifying complex psychological responses. Bogan no longer allows for unmediated emotions to give weight to an otherwise transparent poem. She expects more of poets now. Poets must write *precise* emotion into verse, and

must avoid writing superficial feelings that spill over into "diffused gloom" or result in a "deletion of the tragic" that renders poems "incomplete."

Bogan's advocacy of emotional precision deepens the next year in a 1951 review of Delmore Schwartz's *Vaudeville for a Princess*, Robert Lowell's *The Mills of the Kavanaughs*, and W.H. Auden's *Nones*. The review begins with a continuation of the literary "stocktaking" she started in 1950. According to Bogan, modern poetry has become absorbed in the minutia of experimental or free verse methods, and those techniques have now rigidified into a set of formal poetic rules. Even within such boundaries, poets should be able to express freely intense feeling and to infuse energy into their subjects that will affect the hearts of readers. But modern poets have become so concerned with the "poetic code," as Bogan calls it, that they have omitted expressions of real human life. "Glances at life, as a matter of fact, are now thought to be vulgar and naïve, and emotion becomes increasingly suspect as problems of surface texture receive primary emphasis" (June 9, 1951: 109). She further claims that modern poets disguise emotional barrenness with dazzling technique. She warns that "no amount of cleverness can take the place of true originality or deep feeling. Lack of emotion, indeed, can mask itself as burlesque of emotion" (June 9, 1951: 109). She worries about poets who revel in modern experimental techniques, but lack feeling that might endow their works with meaning.

Bogan represents Delmore Schwartz as a poet who suffers from "burlesque of emotion," and claims that he "pushes the burlesque method to extremes." She complains that the poet "alternates poetic parody with comic prose interludes, he coarsens . . . irony

into bitter farce," and he does so with disrespect for ideas and modes that modern poetic reference holds dear. She argues that Schwartz uses modern vocabulary, syntax, tone, and all the tools available to twentieth-century poets in ways that undermine the depth of contemporary experience, and she insists his "fanciful titles and modish point of view" cannot hide the banality of his subject. Her comments sardonically end with, "We have heard and seen all this a hundred times before" (June 9, 1951: 109). Bogan craves depth of subject and feeling in poetry. Form alone does not dazzle her, nor do modish points of view. Her acute eye recognizes poetry that hides behind itself, disguising dearth of genuine feeling with excessive formal and linguistic ornamentation.

Yet Bogan does possess hope for modern poetry, and volumes by Robert Lowell and W.H. Auden bring substance to that hope. Following her scathing review of Delmore Schwartz, she finds much to admire in Lowell's *The Mills of the Kavanaughs*. Although skeptical about many of Lowell's lyrics she deems "compressed to the point of obscurity," she admires the poet's deeply felt connection to his subjects. "Lowell's relation to his subjects, peculiar as they may be, is absolutely and dramatically direct, and the smallest details . . . make an unforgettable impact upon the attentive reader because they are so clearly a living part of the poet's emotional and imaginative being" (June 9, 1951: 110). She appreciates Auden's *Nones* for similar reasons. Bogan believes that Auden's poetic maturity allows him to doff excessive artistic embellishment, and replace it with simplicity of style that provides readers an intimate connection to the experience he communicates. "His bravura has been abandoned. He now relates the ordinary details of his life to the clearest moments of his vision with the least possible ornamentation"

(June 9, 1951: 110). Neither Lowell nor Auden hides behind technique, Bogan would argue, because they have nothing to hide. Each poet guides readers simply and directly through the poetic experience, and does so by accessing emotional depths that have been subjected to the "imaginative being."

The next year, Bogan proclaims Dylan Thomas as another exemplary contemporary poet who breaks through modernist techniques to arrive at a genuine celebration of the subjects he explores. She praises the emotive qualities of his collection *In Country Sleep*, which, she believes, give the poems meaning. She admits that much of Thomas's appeal to contemporary readers derives from his tendency toward calm and joy over anxiety and pain. But she analyzes this general affinity for Thomas's positive emotional energy by contrasting it with more pallid modern verse one often encounters. "In a period when emotional blankness and inertia pervade poetry in general, Thomas's power to feel joy and express exuberance sets him apart and makes his work interesting and valuable" (Aug. 2, 1952: 65). Bogan no longer grants experimental poets the benefit of the doubt and instead urges them to use new forms to achieve greater depth of insight and emotion. For Bogan a poem without deep feeling is lifeless, uninteresting, and in effect, meaningless.

Bogan consistently attempts to increase her understanding of underlying techniques and themes that give verse its substance and power. She tries to get at the heart of poetry, to discover exactly what makes a good poem succeed and a bad one fail. Her analyses become embedded in the nuances of poets' work as she examines precise attributes that either move her or leave her unsatisfied. Examination of such subtleties

becomes apparent in a 1954 review of Edith Sitwell's *Gardeners and Astronomers* and Kathleen Raine's *The Year One*. She contrasts the two poets' efficacy in creating a genuine connection between language and subject, finding the former unsuccessful and the latter a delight. Sitwell embellishes her collection with illustrations of constellations, animals, and images from the natural world, which Bogan believes gives the book "a seventeenth-century flavor, magic and science operating side by side" (Feb. 27, 1954: 100). But though the drawings might delight Sitwell's admirers, they do not provide Bogan with the substance needed to deem the poems meaningful. For Bogan, Sitwell can beautifully describe her feelings about her subjects, but is unable to make readers *feel* with her.

> We are left with the memory of this poet's predominant theme – her love of the sun and of proud, warm-blooded creatures, including Man, and her hatred of cold, darkness, cruelty, and the reptilian in general. Miss Sitwell is so skillful and so dazzling that she almost persuades us that spiritual intensity follows upon verbal intensity, which may or may not be true. (Feb. 27, 1954: 100)

Bogan does not overtly disparage Sitwell's verse. The review contains a certain amount of approbation, but Bogan's diction indicates dissatisfaction as well. The poet leaves readers "with the memory" of her themes, but not with an emotional experience of his or her own. We remember how the poet feels, but do not feel it ourselves. The last sentence of the passage indicates the dubious reaction she has when analyzing Sitwell's "dazzling" language. The poet "almost persuades," but does not entirely convince her that language and spiritual experience can coincide. Bogan herself cannot be certain the two *can* coincide, but she wants poetry to come as close as possible to linguistic and experiential integration. Bogan believes it is not enough to simply write about feelings'

rather, one must do so in a way that causes readers to experience them. A poem fails if a reader only remembers the poet's emotions, but cannot remember his or her feelings upon reading.

In contrast to Sitwell, Kathleen Raine provides in *The Year One* a connection between poet and subject that Bogan finds appealing. Raine, like Sitwell, writes about nature and the mystical aspects of human communion with the natural world, but Bogan argues that Raine effectively integrates her imaginative consciousness with the subjects she explores.

> Miss Raine knows the power of runes and spells, but her poetry, unlike Miss Sitwell's, does not approach nature by any hieratic, philosophical, literary, or historical path. Miss Raine is *in* nature, as simply as a shell on a shore or a bird in a tree; at moments it is clear that she feels herself to *be* nature. This is the sort of mystical identification that gets into poetry (or any other art) only through the most direct and most sincere means. . . . When her nicety of observation . . . coincides with a deep level of feeling, her poems fuse spirit and substance in a remarkable way. (Feb. 27, 1954: 100)

Bogan views Raine as inextricably bound to her subject. The poet does not simply write *about* nature, the poet becomes nature herself through language. For Bogan, poets who use philosophical or historical rhetoric inevitably separate themselves from the core, the "substance," of the experience they want to communicate. Bogan admires Raine's work because the poet and her subject are one, and the poet expresses that unity in her verse. Bogan indicates *how* Raine achieves that connection at the end of the passage. Raine fuses "spirit and substance" by uniting her observations with an intimately understood "deep level of feeling." Bogan here reiterates her growing belief in the power of emotional precision in which feelings expressed in poetry undergo intense scrutiny and

are communicated in the "most direct and most sincere means" to reveal with lucidity the core of human emotional experience.

Bogan's affinity for fusion of "spirit and substance," or thought and feeling, expands considerably by 1955 when she reviews Stephen Spender's *Collected Poems*. As we have seen in the 1930s and 1940s, Bogan admires Spender's work for its expression of intense feeling. She continues this praise in 1955 as she considers his ability to integrate intellectual reflection with personal emotions. She writes, " . . . it is plain that he has become, over the years, more technically proficient and more open to gradations of thought and feeling." Later in the review, she states, "It is a virtue in Spender that he has moved steadily toward a controlled expression of the romantic spirit . . . . He has persevered in becoming emotionally centered and artistically responsible" (April 30, 1955: 124). Bogan's comment on Spender's ability to fuse thought and emotion indicates how deeply she now views such integration as imperative to the mature artist. She no longer sees intellectual exploration and emotional experience as two separate modes of expression; rather, the two must be inseparable in a balanced, "emotionally centered" art.

Bogan's ideas about thought and feeling deepen in a 1957 review in which she analyzes modern poets' ability to re-envision the formal style after the Victorian period of "overblown Romanticism" in which the "lyric . . . had turned into a caricature of itself." She applauds early Modernists such as T.E. Hulme and T.S. Eliot for refusing to participate in this ornate and strict formal style, and for composing poetry unencumbered by rigid metrical structures. Bogan argues that after the period of high Modernism during

which experimentation dominated poetic trends, poets are now returning to traditional modes of expression to find balance between tradition in form and innovation in expression, a development she praises. For Bogan, modern poetic endeavor infuses structured meter with the linguistic vibrancy characteristic of experimental forms. She writes of contemporary poets:

> They have learned how to get around certain dangers. They are avoiding the poem as intellectual exercise and the poem flattened out and warped by rules . . . . They have instinctively recoiled from metaphysics without wit and from design not backed up by emotion . . . . They are not terrified by laughter or by "music," and they are free to give as much attention to their waking consciousness as to their unconscious dreams. (Sept. 14, 1957: 173)

Bogan illuminates the "certain dangers" by listing ways poets avoid them. Modern poets address emotional experience in verse, rather than merely exercising their intellects. They disavow allegiance to particular schools of expression, and instead work within the impulses of individual creativity. They realize that a poem's "design" must be supported by the weight of emotion, and must acknowledge the emptiness of theoretical principles that lack a connection to human experience. These notes of praise illustrate Bogan's emphasis on the emotive qualities of verse, but the last sentence of the passage indicates her movement toward cohesion between mind and heart. She writes that a poet must grant equal consideration to "unconscious dreams," or the world of human passions and desires, and to the controlled and purposeful actions of the "waking consciousness." Neither element should receive more attention than the other. For Bogan, poets must reveal the imagistic, abstract, and mysterious world of our dreams, but must do so

without sacrificing contact with the tangible world. The poet's conscious mind must work in tandem with internal feelings to enable free and meaningful expression.

Later in the same review Bogan writes about James Wright's *The Green Wall*, an analysis that offers a less subtle glimpse into her perspective on the dichotomy. She admires Wright's collection for its blending of opposites, for its "extra dimension" that considers life and death simultaneously, and for its ability to diffuse reality without entering the realm of the surreal. Though this praise illustrates Bogan's enthusiasm for poetry that combines disparate elements, her description of Wright's "imaginative preferences" offers a more overt statement of her views. She claims that Wright crafts his poetic voice in "the age-old manner of the lyric poet, who draws his thought and emotion so closely together that they fuse" (Sept. 14, 1957: 174). For Bogan, the "fusion" within the language of Wright's verse presents the mark of a mature poet who understands the power of well-crafted lyricism. Though Bogan addresses "thought" and "emotion" as two dichotomous elements in Wright's poetry, she lauds Wright's combination of the two. Since Bogan has devoted much of her career to debating which mode of expression most effectively reveals human experience, it seems no accident that her she clearly states her final resolution. She realizes now that poets should not merely *balance* intellect with emotion, but must *fuse* the two so closely together that the reader has no indication of where one ends and the other begins. Good poets craft language so that the workings of the mind and the feelings of the heart become an indivisible model of real human experience.

Poets must achieve "fusion" of the intellect and the emotions, but must do so without diffusing the force and immediacy of either mode of expression. When poetry grants both modes equal weight, the poem becomes more focused, centered, and effective in communicating the poet's attitudes toward the subject explored. Bogan's advocacy for blending expressions of the mind and heart appears in a 1962 review of Alan Dugan's *Poems* in which she focuses on satiric poems. She compares Dugan to Martial and Swift in his portrayals of the inhumanity and wretchedness of the modern world that do not spill over into pathos. She admires Dugan's "rough talk" and writes that "he can describe his own bafflements with a certain detachment, while showing himself vulnerable to the betrayals and damages inherent in the human condition in general" (Mar. 24, 1962: 175). Bogan recognizes the emotional "detachment" needed for the satiric voice, but believes the satirist should infuse his or her work with a certain vulnerability to connect it to the human suffering it attempts to reveal. Effective satire blends a strong emotional center, an empathy for the sadness and desperation inherent in the human condition, with a keen intellect, one that crafts language distanced enough from its subject to appear as a disinterested observer.

Bogan continues her approbation of Dugan by praising his "balanced language" which maintains the cool voice of the satirist while simultaneously releasing "unequivocal utterances of shock and rage." Dugan evokes emotion even while seeming at "play, with sympathy, over the tragic and the inexplicable, the fantastic and enigmatic, in nature and man." His poetry succeeds because it constructs a linguistic bridge between the profound anxieties of human degradation and the nonchalant reaction of the satiric

persona. He raises his poetic voice above personal rumination, and elevates his work, through fusion of emotion and intellect, toward contemplation of the depravity of the human race. Bogan further notes her affinity for this fusion when she places Dugan's work into the "timeless vein that comes to the surface of literature unexpectedly and in unlikely places – a vein of powerful feeling joined to energetic talent" (Mar. 24, 1962: 175). Bogan appreciates Dugan's intellectual "talent" for crafting language because it is unified with the poet's "powerful feeling."

Later the same year, Bogan again champions poetry that blends heart and mind. She writes a positive review of Pablo Neruda's *Selected Poems* and Hugh MacDiarmid's *The Collected Poems of Hugh MacDiarmid*, drawing attention to ways each poet offers political commentary in his verse. Both exhibit patriotism, and Bogan recognizes that love of country always reveals itself as emotionalism. But Bogan commends Neruda and MacDiarmid for linking their love for Chile and Scotland, respectively, to the intellectual analysis of social issues involved in their nationalistic perspectives. She writes:

> Both are capable . . . of mingling the emotions of nationalism with the philosophy of the international class struggle; Neruda has made no secret of his allegiance to Communism, and MacDiarmid's early intense admiration for Lenin has never lapsed. And neither poet has ever considered restraint a virtue. Both have written endlessly on their favorite themes . . . (Nov. 17, 1962: 240).

For Bogan, these poets capture the raw emotion of nationalism, yet model a rational philosophy based on injustices they see in the world. One can assume, given the rhetorical structure of the passage, that had either poet considered *only* social or political concerns without eliciting the emotion of patriotism, or had they sentimentalized allegiance to Lenin and Communism without intellectual analysis, Bogan would have

disapproved of the two collections of poetry. But she believes Neruda and MacDiarmid avoid such mistakes. They "mingle" their feelings with their ideas without "restraint," a quality that gives their work a sensitive humanity, elevating it to the category of "good poetry."

After the 1962 review of Neruda and MacDiarmid, Bogan seems to abjure discussing the synthesis of emotion and intellect in verse. She remains silent on the issue until 1967 when she offers one of her treatises on the state of modern poetry. Between 1962 and 1967, she wrote only two longer essay-length reviews, both published in 1964, each focusing almost exclusively on form and style, with no mention of emotion. In the April 1964 review, Bogan writes expositions on Robert Graves's *New Poems*, Louis MacNeice's *Collected Poems 1925-48*, and Vernon Watkins's *Affinities*. She devotes not one sentence to emotional expression. Instead, the commentary centers on intricacies of form, meter, symbolism, and historical analysis of poetic traditions dating back to the Romantics (Apr. 11, 1964: 178). The November 1964 review presents a similar thematic tendency. Bogan writes a negative review of Karl Shapiro's *The Bourgeois Poet* and John Berryman's *77 Dream Songs*. Her analysis considers form, meter, and diction in each work, and offers no commentary on the content or emotional expression of the poems. Her disapproval instead derives from the poets' uses of language; for example, she labels Berryman's metrical and syntactical patterns "linguistic chaos" that serve to "alternately amuse and irritate" (Nov. 7 1964: 242). Bogan's relative silence about emotion over this five year period indicates that perhaps her concern has drifted away from negotiating the dichotomy and subsequent synthesis that had dominated her career.

I would argue that by this stage in her critical attitudes she has resolved the matter for herself; she no longer needs to devote her reviews to examining the complexities of infusing emotions and ideas simultaneously into poetry.

But the subject does return to Bogan's analysis one last time in 1967 when she provides a description of the "tedium" she believes has settled on contemporary poets. The review begins with a description of faults in modern poetry that rest primarily in poets' inability to coordinate poetic technique and personal feeling. Bogan refines her opinions about thought and feeling in verse by noting that in attempts to fuse the two elements linguistically, poets must not sacrifice the raw energy that derives from genuine emotional response. The fever and pitch of pure emotion must be felt even within the most methodical and rational attempts to illuminate the human condition.

> That an immense tedium has settled down over the writings of the populous avant-garde is at the moment all too apparent. And the emotional field is narrowing; one emotional response after another has been sealed away, by some strange tacit consent, from the poet's insight and attention. The general run of verse thought to be experimental is in actuality as tightly tied to its own set of conventions as "formal" poetry ever was. After the emotional excesses (and the sham freedoms) of very nearly all Victorian poetry, techniques of intensification and of elimination had to be applied; to this we all agree. But when, as at present, it would seem that anguish, bitterness, and fright have become the most available sources of poetic expression, it is rather difficult to remember that poetry was once able to exhort, stimulate, open up, discover, deepen, interpret (and *console*). (Mar. 4, 1967: 161)

Bogan's complaint that modern poets cannot express emotional energies present in the human psyche illustrates a blending of emotional and intellectual concerns. She admonishes poets not only to dazzle the eye, but also to touch the heart. She no longer reprimands experimental poetry, as she did in the 1940s, and she no longer considers emotion the savior of ineffectual technique. In each comment on the role of emotion in

poetry, she expresses the need for balance between form and content, between the human capacity for methodical analysis and passionate energy. Poets must elicit emotion from the depths of their psyches, either sorrow or joy, and use the power of intense feeling to complement technical excellence.

The passage comes from one of Bogan's last reviews for *The New Yorker*, and her return to analyzing emotion in poetry seems a fitting conclusion to her decades-long internal struggle with the subject. Her subject here, as it has always been, is the importance of maintaining an almost feverish attention to the human heart even within poetry that challenges formal conventions. Though she acknowledges the technical brilliance in modern avant-garde poetry and admits the significance of rebellion against "emotional excesses" of the Victorian period, she laments the result of such emphasis on restraint. Poets have now turned so far away from sensibility that genuine feeling has been drained from the genre.

Her hope, though, rests in the power that good poetry can exert over the mind and heart. She writes that poetry "was once able to exhort, stimulate, open up, discover, deepen, interpret (and *console*)." This list of responses to poetry provides a final illustration in her reviews for *The New Yorker* of her wish to fuse emotions and intellect. The list includes reactions formed on both rational and emotional levels. Poetry must "open up" the eyes, heart, mind, and spirit to unveil the mysteries of the tangible world; it must "discover" ways of understanding and perceiving the universe and our existence in it; it must "deepen" our experience of living and our relationships with ourselves and others; finally, Bogan emphatically notes that poetry must "*console*" us and serve as a

reminder that we are not alone, and that there *is* a remedy for the isolation, fear, and regret we all experience. Each of her words – "stimulate," "discover," "deepen," – corresponds to both reason and feeling; she isolates neither mode of response. Poetry "deepens" the personal experience of living, of perceiving the world with the mind, and of feeling the world with the heart. Bogan effectively communicates her belief in the power of verse to fuse thought and feeling together, to so inextricably bind them that neither poet nor reader can categorize his or her experience of a poem into either sphere.

Bogan published only two reviews in *The New Yorker* after March of 1967. She seems to have reached her conclusions about the dichotomy between emotion and intellect in poetry in her antepenultimate review, and hardly mentions the subject in her final two essays. She reiterates her view that modern poets are unable to attack their subjects "head-on" with "sweeps of joy or swells of sublimity" (Dec. 28, 1968: 62), but otherwise remains silent on the issue. Her career ends on a note of calm, finally achieving the balance that she sought in her poetry and critical writings for almost four decades. It is not the purpose of this study to evaluate the poetry written in her final years to determine how successful her efforts were in combining the two modes of expression. However, I hope this study has demonstrated that in her prose Bogan did arrive at a rhetoric, indeed a philosophy, that compels artists to fuse the mind and heart in ways impossible outside the language of verse.

Conclusion

This study has shown that prevailing opinions about Louise Bogan have been misinformed by exclusive attention to her verse. Bogan scholars in the past have circumscribed her emotional poetics into categories of either emotional release or emotional repression based solely on the psychology of her early poetic persona. Yet her reviews illustrate an evolution of her opinions on emotion and intellect in poetry in which she finally synthesizes the two modes into a unified model of poetic expression. In examining Bogan's emotional poetics, I hope I have also demonstrated the significance of Bogan's prose as a major contribution to American letters. Given the longevity of her career and the range of poets she examines, along with the pleasure to be gained from her prose, it seems a shame that her eloquent, charming, and insightful critical voice has gone largely unnoticed.

The critical neglect Bogan's prose has suffered over the past several decades has very recently achieved some redress with the 2005 publication of Mary Kinzie's edition of Bogan's prose, titled *A Poet's Prose: Selected Writings of Louise Bogan.* In addition to a few previously unpublished poems, Kinzie's anthology includes selections from Bogan's short fiction and journal entries, as well as approximately forty-five articles and reviews organized by the poet discussed. For example, the collection reprints six of Bogan's essays on W.B. Yeats, twelve on W.H. Auden, three on T.S. Eliot, and four on Robert Lowell. Though Kinzie does not provide analysis of these review essays, in her introduction she acknowledges the inadequate attention Bogan has received in academia. She also characterizes Bogan as a writer who "brought the brief review into high profile

as a form open to both learning and argument (and she could say more in five hundred words than most writers can in five thousand)" (xxv). Kinzie offers an appreciative description of the breadth of Bogan's literary career; the collection will prove valuable to future scholars who will want a more complete view of Bogan's achievements.

Although Kinzie's collection and other editions of Bogan's prose writings are important, critics need to further examine the ways Bogan's career touched the lives and work of her contemporaries by publishing detailed historical and rhetorical analyses of her criticism. Bogan's work can provide insights into nearly a half century of American literary culture, along with information about poets and their reception, that may prove invaluable to our understanding of twentieth-century poetic achievement. Bogan helped to create much of the poetic climate in America in the four decades during which she was acknowledged as a major public critic, yet her critical contribution has not received the attention it deserves. Scholars must begin to explore Bogan's significance as a literary figure; it is my hope that this study will prove valuable toward that end.

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NOTE: All Louise Bogan reviews for *The New Yorker* are listed in chronological order.

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Appendix

Chronological List of Bogan's Poetry Reviews for *The New Yorker*

This appendix offers a comprehensive list of each essay-length poetry review Louise Bogan wrote for *The New Yorker* from March 21, 1931 until December 28, 1968. I offer this resource for future Bogan scholars researching her reviews since the only existing reference work for Bogan's writings, *Louise Bogan: A Reference Source* by Claire Knox, contains numerous incorrect entries, with erroneous dates, page numbers, and misleading annotations. This list does not include the shorter mini-reviews Bogan wrote for the "Briefly Noted" section of *The New Yorker*.

"Books, Books, Books: The Winter's Verse." Mar. 21, 1931: 80-85.
W.J. Turner – *Miss America*
Nathalia Crane – *Pocohontas*
Sylvia Townsend Warner – *Opus 7*
Stephen Vincent Benet - *Ballads and Poems – 1915-1930*
Conrad Aiken - *John Deth, and Other Poems*
E.A. Robinson - *The Glory of the Nightingales*
Elizabeth Madox Roberts - *Under the Trees*
Roy Campbell – *Adamastor*
Horace Gregory - *Chelsea Rooming House*
Lynn Riggs - *The Iron Dish*
Thomas Moult, ed. - *Best Poems of 1930*
Gerard Manley Hopkins - *Poems of Gerard Manley Hopkins*

"Books: Plagued by the Nightingales." Feb. 13, 1932: 62-65.
Louis Untermeyer – *The Book of Living Verse*
Petrarch – *The Sonnets of Petrarch*, trans. by Joseph Auslander
Thomas Moult, ed. – *Best Poems of 1931*
James Stephens – *Strict Joy*
E.A. Robinson – *Matthias at the Door*
Conrad Aiken – *The Forth by Day of Osiris Jones*
E.E. Cummings – *W(viva)*
John Masefield – *Minnie Maylow's Story and Other Tales and Scenes*
Peggy Bacon – *Animosities*
Selma Robinson – *City Child*
Margaret Fishback – *I Feel Better Now*
George Dillon – *The Flowering Stone*

Phelps Putnam – *The Five Seasons*
T.S. Eliot – "Triumphal March"
Robert Bridges – *Shorter Poems*

"Books: Half-Pounds and Other Poets." July 30, 1932: 39-40.
Ezra Pound – *Cantos*
Archibald MacLeish – *Conquistador*
Elinor Wylie – *Collected Poems*
Hart Crane – "The Bridge"
Robinson Jeffers – *Thurso's Landing*
Padraid Colum - *Poems*
Louis Untermeyer – *Food and Drink*
Allen Tate – *Poems, 1928-1931*

"Books: Snarling Under the Sofa, and Other Attitudes." Feb. 18, 1933: 62-63.
Oliver Wells, ed. – *An Anthology of Younger Poets*
Aldous Huxley – *Texts and Pretexts: An Anthology with Commentaries*
William Rose Benet – *Rip Tide*
E.A. Robinson – *Nicodemus*
Theodore Roosevelt and Grantland Rice, eds. – *Taps: Selected Poems of the Great War*
Anonymous – *Ballads of the B.E.F.*
John Masefield – *A Tale of Troy*
David Morton – *Earth's Processional*
Wilbert Snow – *Down East*
Frances Frost – *These Acres*

"The Season's Verse." July 15, 1933: 46-48.
Hart Crane – *Collected Poems*
D.H. Lawrence – *Last Poems*
Ezra Pound – *Cantos* (American edition)
Walter de la Mare – *The Fleeting*
Harold Lewis Cook – *Spell Against Death*
William Faulker – *A Green Bough*

"Some Months of Poetry." Apr. 7, 1934: 95-98.
W.B. Yeats – *Collected Poems*
Oliver St. John Gogarty – *Selected Poems*
E.A. Robinson – *Talifer*
Sara Teasdale – *Strange Victory*
Lizette Woodworth Reese – *Pastures*
Winifred Welles – *Blossoming Antlers*
Archibald MacLeish – *Poems, 1924-1933*
John Peale Bishop – *Now With His Love*

"The Season's Verse." Nov. 24, 1934: 90-92.

Edna St. Vincent Millay – *Wine from These Grapes*
Genevieve Taggard – *Not Mine to Finish*
Mary Zaturenska – *Threshold and Hearth*
Paul Engle – *American Song*
E.A. Robinson – *Amaranth*
Gerald Bullett, ed. – *The English Galaxy*
T.S. Eliot – *The Rock*
Edith Sitwell – *The Pleasures of Poetry*
Isidor Schneider – *Comrade: Mister*
Elizabeth Drew – *Discovering Poetry*

"The Season's Verse." May 4, 1935: 66-68.

Gerard Manley Hopkins – *The Letters of Gerard Manley Hopkins to Robert Bridges*, ed. by C.C. Abbott
Gerard Manley Hopkins – *Correspondence of Gerard Manley Hopkins*, ed. by C.C. Abbott
C. Day Lewis – *Collected Poems*
Stephen Spender – "Vienna"
Marianne Moore – *Selected Poems*
Lincoln Kirstein – *Low Ceiling*
Archibald MacLeish – *Panic*
W.B. Yeats – *Wheels and Butterflies*
Mark Van Doren – *A Winter Diary*
Merrill Moore – *Six Sides to a Man*
I.A. Richards – *On Imagination*
MacKinlay Kantor, ed. – *Turkey in the Straw*
Robert P. Tristram Coffin – *Strange Holiness*
Horace Gregory – *Chorus for Survival*
Thomas McGreevy – *Poems*
Leonard Bacon – *The Voyage of Autoleon*
Lola Ridge – *Dance of Fire*
Harriet Monroe – *Chosen Poems*

"The Season's Verse." Nov. 9, 1935: 84-87.

W.H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood – *The Dog Beneath the Skin, or, Where is Francis?*
T.S. Eliot – *Murder in the Cathedral*
W.H. Davis – *Collected Poems*
Joseph Auslander – *No Traveller Returns*
Laurence Whistler – *Four Walls*
Theodore Dreiser – *Moods: Philosophical and Emotional*
John Gould Fletcher – *XXIV Elegies*
Edgar Lee Masters – *Invisible Landscapes*

Herbert Read – *Poems: 1914-1934*
Richard Aldington – *Life Quest*
Robinson Jeffers – *Solstice*
E.E. Cummings – *Tom*
Winifred Welles – *A Spectacle for Scholars*
Arthur Guiterman – *Death and General Putnam*
David McCord – *Bay Window Ballads*
Witter Bynner – *Guest Book*
Louis Untermeyer – *The Collected Poems and Parodies of Louis Untermeyer*
Anne Winslow, ed. – *Trial Balances*
W.B. Yeats – *Collected Plays of W.B. Yeats*
W.B. Yeats – *The King of the Greatest Tower*

"The Season's Verse." Feb. 22, 1936: 72-74.
Charles Williams, ed. – *The New Book of English Verse*
Muriel Rukeyser – *Theory of Flight*
Kenneth Patchen – *Before the Brave*
Edwin Rolfe – *To My Contemporaries*
Robert Fitzgerald – *Poems*
Nathalia Crane – *Swear by the Night*
Audrey Wurdemann – *The Seven Sins*
Ruth Pitter – *A Mad Lady's Garland*
Peggy Bacon – *Cat-Calls*
Jean Starr Untermeyer – *Winged Child*
Robert Nathan – *Selected Poems*
Thomas Moult, ed. – *The Best Poems of 1935*
E.A. Robinson – *King Jasper*
Siegfried Sassoon – *Vigils*
Franz Werfel – *The Eternal Road*

"The Season's Verse." May 23, 1936: 78-80.
T.S. Eliot – *Collected Poems*
Charles Baudelaire – *Flowers of Evil,* trans. by George Dillon and Edna St. Vincent Millay
Archibald MacLeish – *Public Speech*
Paul Engle – *Break the Heart's Anger*
C. Day Lewis – *A Time to Dance*
John Peale Bishop – *Minute Particulars*
Robert Penn Warren – *Thirty-six Poems*
Charlotte Wilder – *Phases of the Moon*

"Verse." June 20, 1936: 60-62.
Stephen Vincent Benet – *Burning City*
John Masefield – *A Letter from Pontus*

Walter de la Mare – *Poems, 1919-1934*
Helen Cornelius – *In Tract of Time*

"Verse." Aug. 22, 1936: 58-62.
Carl Sandburg – *The People, Yes*
Allen Tate – *The Mediterranean and Other Poems*
Euripides – *Alcestis*, trans. by Dudley Fitts and Robert Fitzgerald

"Verse." Oct. 3, 1936: 66-67.
John Hall Wheelock – *Poems, 1911-1936*
Frederic Prokosch – *The Assassins*
Genevieve Taggard – *Calling Western Union*

"Verse." Oct. 31, 1936: 64-65.
A.E. Housman – *More Poems*

"Verse." Nov. 14, 1936: 115-117.
W.B. Yeats, ed. – *The Oxford Book of Modern Verse*

"Poetesses in the Parlor." Dec. 5, 1936: 42-52.
Rufus Wilmot Griswold, ed. – *The Female Poets of America*
Jessie F. O'Donnell, ed. – *Love Poems of Three Centuries*

"Verse." Feb. 13, 1937: 63-65.
W.H. Auden – *On This Island*
W.H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood – *The Ascent of F6*

"Verse." May 5, 1937: 70.
H.D. – *Ion* by Euripides, translation.
Edith Sitwell – *Selected Poems*

"Verse." Aug. 7, 1937: 51-53.
Edna St. Vincent Millay – *Conversation at Midnight*

"Verse." Sept. 25, 1937: 72-74.
Federico Garcia Lorca – *Lament for the Death of a Bullfighter and Other Poems*
James Joyce – *Collected Poems*
Sara Teasdale – *Collected Poems*
Marya Zaturenska – *Cold Morning Sky*
W.B. Yeats, trans. – *The Ten Principal Upanishads*
Mark Van Doren – *The Last Look and Other Poems*

"Verse." Dec. 18, 1937: 93-94.
Louis MacNeice – *Poems*

Ezra Pound – *The Fifth Decad of Cantos*
Richard Thornton, ed. – *Recognition of Robert Frost*

"Verse." Dec. 25, 1937: 50-52.
Alice Roosevelt Longworth and Theodore Roosevelt, eds. – *The Desk Drawer Anthology*

"Verse." Mar. 12, 1938: 61-62.
T.S. Eliot, trans. – *Anabase* by St.-J. Perse

"Verse." Apr. 2, 1938: 61-62.
W.B. Yeats – *The Herne's Egg*

"Verse." Apr. 23, 1938: 64-65.
A.E. Housman - *My Brother, A.E. Housman: Personal Recollections Together with Thirty Hitherto Unpublished Poems*, ed. by Laurence Housman.

"Verse." July 23, 1938: 58-59.
Selden Rodman, ed. – *A New Anthology of Modern Poetry*

"Verse." Oct. 1, 1938: 64-65.
Stephen Spender – *Trial of a Judge*

"Verse." Oct. 22, 1938: 83-85.
Charles Henri Ford – *The Garden of Disorder*
Kay Boyle – *A Glad Day*
Hudson Strode, ed. – *Immortal Lyrics*
Frederic Prokosch – *The Carnival*

"Verse." Dec. 24, 1938: 50-52.
W.H. Auden, ed. – *The Oxford Book of Light Verse*
Laura Riding – *Collected Poems*
Rainer Maria Rilke – *Translations from the Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke*, ed. by M.D. Herter Norton.

"Verse." Mar. 4, 1939: 68-70.
Robert Frost – *Collected Poems: 1939*

"Verse." Apr. 15, 1939: 83-85.
T.S. Eliot – *The Family Reunion*

"Verse." May 20, 1939: 80-82.
Edna St. Vincent Millay – *Huntsman, What Quarry?*

"Verse." June 24, 1939: 70-71.
Rainer Maria Rilke – *Duino Elegies*, trans. by J.B. Leishman and Stephen Spender.

"Verse." Oct. 28, 1939: 68-69.
Max Eastman, ed. – *Anthology for the Enjoyment of Poetry*

"Books: Verse." Dec. 16, 1939: 100-101.
Archibald MacLeish – *America Was Promises*
Muriel Rukeyser – *A Turning Wind*

"Verse." Jan. 27, 1940: 52-54.
Arthur Rimbaud – *Une Saison en Enfer*, trans. by Delmore Schwartz.
John Ciardi – *Homeward to America*
Dylan Thomas – *The World I Breathe*
Louis MacNeice – *Autumn Diary*

"Verse." Feb. 24, 1940: 68-69.
W.H. Auden – *Another Time*

"Verse." Apr. 20, 1940: 75-77.
Oscar Williams – *The Man Coming Toward You*
Ruth Pitter – *The Spirit Watches*

"Verse." June 1, 1940: 73-75.
W.B. Yeats – *Last Poems and Plays*
Federico Garcia Lorca – *The Poet in New York*

"Verse." Oct. 19, 1940: 87-89.
W.B. Yeats – *Letters on Poetry from W.B. Yeats to Dorothy Wellesley*, ed. by Kathleen Raine.

"Verse." Nov. 9, 1940: 76-78.
Ezra Pound – *Cantos LII-LXXI*
Kenneth Fearing – *Collected Poems*

"Verse." Dec. 28, 1940: 62-63.
Conrad Aiken – *And in the Human Heart*
Edna St. Vincent Millay – *Make Bright the Arrows*
Frederic Prokosch – *Death at Sea*
Thomas Hardy – *Selected Poems*

"Verse." Mar. 1, 1941: 51-53.
Louis MacNeice – *Poems, 1925-1940*

John Peale Bishop – *Selected Poems*
E.E. Cummings – *50 Poems*

"Verse." Apr. 12, 1941: 83-85.
W.H. Auden – *The Double Man*
Horace Gregory – *Poems 1930-1940*

"Verse." May 17, 1941: 75-78.
James Laughlin IV, ed. – *The Poet of the Month* (series)
Harry Brown – *The End of a Decade*
Yvor Winters – *Poems*

"Verse." Sept. 6, 1941: 60-61.
Ridgeley Torrence – *Selected Poems*
John Wheelwright – *Selected Poems*
Josephine Miles – *Poems on Several Occasions*
E.M. Butler – *Rainer Maria Rilke*

"Verse." Oct. 18, 1941: 94-96.
Richard Aldington, ed. – *The Viking Book of Poetry of the English-Speaking World*
Hugh MacDiarmid, ed. – *The Golden Treasury of Scottish Poetry*

"Verse." Nov. 1, 1941: 71-73.
Marianne Moore – *What Are Years*
Harry Brown – *The Poem of Bunker Hill*
George Zabriskie – *The Mind's Geography*

"Verse." Nov. 29, 1941: 84-86.
Mark Van Doren – *The Mayfield Deer*
Delmore Schwarz – *Shenandoah*

"Verse." Feb. 14, 1942: 60-62.
F.T. Prince – *Poems*
Malcolm Cowley – *The Dry Season*
Rainer Maria Rilke - *Poems from the Book of Hours*, trans. by Babette Deutsch
John Masefield – *Gautama the Enlightened*
C.W. Hatfield, ed. – *The Complete Poems of Emily Jane Bronte*

"Verse." Mar. 7, 1942: 54-55.
Five Young American Poets: Second Series, 1941
Rolfe Humphries – *Out of the Jewel*

"Verse." Apr. 4, 1942: 56-58.
W.R. Rogers – *Awake! and Other Wartime Poems*

"Verse." July 4, 1942: 54-56.
Louis Untermeyer, ed. – *Modern American Poetry: A Critical Anthology*
Louis Untermeyer, ed. – *Modern British Poetry: A Critical Anthology*

"Verse." Aug. 7, 1943: 62-64.
The Poets of the Year (series)
John Wilmot, Earl of Rochester - *A Satire Against Mankind and Other Poems*, ed. by Harry Levin
Friedrich Holderlin – *Some Poems of Friedrich Holderlin*, trans. by Frederic Prokosch

"Verse." Oct. 10, 1942: 60-62.
Stephen Spender – *Ruins and Visions*
Wallace Stevens – *Parts of a World*

"Verse." Oct. 31, 1942: 68-70.
Patricia Ledward and Colin Strang, eds. – *Poems of This War by Younger Poets*
Muriel Rukeyser – *Wake Island*
Jose Garcia Villa – *Have Come, Am Here*

"Verse." Jan. 9, 1943: 45-47.
Karl Shapiro – *Person, Place, and Thing*
Edmund Wilson – *Note-Books of Night*

"Verse." Apr. 17, 1943: 80-82.
Stefan George – *Poems*, trans. by Ernst Morwitz and Carol North Valhope

"Verse." May 22, 1943: 72-74.
T.S. Eliot – *Four Quartets*

"Verse." Oct. 2, 1943: 76-78.
Rudyard Kipling – *A Choice of Kipling's Verse Made by T.S. Eliot*, ed. by T.S. Eliot

"Verse." Nov. 13, 1943: 98-104.
Horace Gregory, ed. – *The Triumph of Life: Poems of Consolation for the English-Speaking World*

"Verse." Feb. 26, 1944: 82-86.
Kenneth Patchen – *Cloth of the Tempest*
George Barker – *Sacred and Secular Elegies*
Dunstan Thompson – *Poems*

Arthur Rimbaud – *Les Illuminations*, trans. by Helen Rootham

"Verse." Apr. 22, 1944: 84-86.
Robert Penn Warren – *Selected Poems: 1923-1943*
Robert Fitzgerald – *A Wreath for the Sea*

"Verse." July 22, 1944: 57-58.
Yvor Winters – *The Giant Weapon*
John Pudney – *Flight Above Cloud*
William Justema – *Private Papers*

"Verse." Sept. 15, 1945: 83-84.
Rainer Maria Rilke – *Letters of Rainer Maria Rilke*, trans. by Jane Bannard Greene and M.D. Herter Norton

"Books: Verse." Sept. 23, 1944: 77-78.
W.H. Auden – *For the Time Being*

"Verse." Oct. 21, 1944: 89-90.
Muriel Rukeyser – *Beast in View*
Marya Zaturenska – *The Golden Mirror*
Babette Deutsch – *Take Them, Stranger*
Marguerite Young – *Moderate Fable*
H.D. – *The Walls Do Not Fall*

"Verse." Nov. 11, 1944: 88-89.
Marianne Moore – *Nevertheless*

"Verse." Jan. 13, 1945: 74-78.
Oscar Williams, ed. – *New Poems: 1944*

"Verse." Apr. 7, 1945: 78-79.
Robert Frost – *A Masque of Reason*
Allen Tate – *The Winter Sea*

"Verse." Apr. 14, 1945: 78-79.
W.H. Auden – *The Collected Poetry of W.H. Auden*

"Verse." Apr. 21, 1945: 78-82.
Millicent Todd Bingham – *Ancestor's Brocade*
Emily Dickinson – *Bolts of Melody*, ed. by Millicent Todd Bingham

"Verse." June 16, 1945: 61-67.
William Rose Benet – *The Dust Which Is God*

Robert P. Tristram Coffin – *Poems for a Son with Wings*
Charles Edward Butler – *Cut Is the Branch*
Herbert Read – *A World Within a War*
George Zabriskie – *Like to Root*

"Verse." Nov. 3, 1945: 96-98.
Edmund Blunden – *Shells by a Stream*
Louis MacNeice – *Springboard: Poems 1941-1944*
Norman Nicholson – *Five Rivers*
Alex Comfort – *The Song of Lazarus*

"Books: Verse." Feb. 9, 1946: 95-96.
Richard Eberhart and Selden Rodman – *War and the Poet: An Anthology Expressing Men's Attitudes Toward War from Ancient Times to the Present*
Randall Jarrell – *Little Friend, Little Friend*
Louis Aragon – *Aragon: Poet of the French Resistance*, ed. by Hanna Josephson and Malcolm Cowley.

"Verse." May 11, 1946: 94-97.
Robinson Jeffers – *Medea: Freely Adapted from the 'Medea' of Euripides*

"Verse." July 6, 1946: 57-59.
Robert Graves – *Poems: 1938-1945*
Norman Rosten – *The Big Road*

"Verse." Oct. 5, 1946: 121-123.
Elizabeth Bishop – *North and South*
Thomas Merton – *A Man in the Divided Sea*
John Manifold – *Selected Verse*

"Verse." Nov. 9, 1946: 121-123.
Andre Breton – *Young Cherry Trees Secured Against Hares*, trans. by Edouard Roditi
Arthur Rimbaud – *Illuminations*, trans. by Louise Varese.

"Verse." Nov. 30, 1946: 129-132.
Robert Lowell – *Lord Weary's Castle*
Janet Lewis – *The Earth-Bound*

"Verse." Apr. 5, 1947: 95-97.
John Frederick Nims – *The Iron Pastoral*
Stephen Spender – *Poems of Dedication*

"Verse." May 3, 1947: 100-101.
Charles Baudelaire – *Flowers of Evil*, trans. by Geoffrey Wagner
Wallace Stevens – *Transport to Summer*
Frederic Prokosch – *Chosen Poems*

"Verse." July 26, 1947: 57-59.
W.H. Auden – *The Age of Anxiety*

"Verse." Sept. 13, 1947: 118-119.
John Betjeman – *Slick But Not Streamlined*
Jean Garrigue – *The Ego and the Centaur*
Louis Coxe – *The Sea Faring*

"Verse." Nov. 15, 1947: p. 118-119.
Richard Wilbur – *The Beautiful Changes*
Howard Nemerov – *The Image and the Law*
William Jay Smith – *Poems*
John Ciardi – *Other Skies*
Karl Shapiro – *Trial of a Poet*

"Verse." Jan. 31, 1948: 56-59.
Charles D. Abbott, ed. – *Poets at Work*

"Verse." Mar. 20, 1948: 110-114
D.H. Lawrence – *Selected Poems*

"Verse." May 15, 1948: 117-121.
Randall Jarrell – *Losses*
Theodore Roethke – *The Lost Son*

"Verse." Oct. 30, 1948: 107-109.
Ezra Pound – *The Pisan Cantos*
Ezra Pound – *The Cantos*

"Books: Verse." Dec. 25, 1948: 56-57.
Edith Sitwell – *A Song of the Cold*
T.S. Eliot – Audio recording of "Difficulties of a Statesman" and "Triumphal March"

"Verse." Mar. 26, 1949: 95-97.
Kenneth Rexroth, ed. – *The New British Poets: An Anthology*
Louis MacNeice – *Holes in the Sky*
John Heath-Stubbs – *The Charity of the Stars*
Sorley Maclean – "Knightsbridge of Libya"

"Verse." Aug. 27, 1949: 63-65.
C.M. Bowra – *The Creative Experiement*

"Books: Goethe Two Hundred Years After." Sept. 17, 1949: 100-103.
Albert Schweitzer – *Goethe: Four Studies*, trans. by Charles R. Joy
Ludwig Lewisohn – *Goethe: The Story of a Man*
Berthold Biermann, ed. – *Goethe's World: As Seen in Letters and Memoirs*
Hermann J. Weigand, trans. and Ludwig Curtius, ed. – *Goethe: Wisdom and Experience*
Barker Fairley – *A Study of Goethe*
Karl Vietor – *Goethe the Poet*
D.J. Enright – *A Commentary on Goethe's 'Faust'*
Goethe – *Faust* trans. by Gerard de Nerval, Alexandre Arnoux and R. Biemel

"Verse." Nov. 26, 1949: 126-131.
Harry Brown - *The Beast in His Hunger*
Jose Garcia Villa – *Volume Two*
Rosalie Moore – *The Grasshopper's Man*
Herbert Cahoon – *Thanatopsis*

"Books: Verse." Mar. 18, 1950: 116-117.
Selden Rodman, ed. – *100 Modern Poems*
V. Sackville West and Harold Nicholson, eds. – *Another World Than This...*

"Verse." May 20, 1950: 112-117.
Robert Nathan – *The Green Leaf*
E.E. Cummings – *Xiape: Seventy-one Poems*
Alfred Hayes – *Welcome to the Castle*
Muriel Rukeyser – *Orpheus*
Peter Viereck – *Strike Through the Mask!*
Kenneth Rexroth – *The Signature of All Things*
Emma Swan – *The Lion and the Lady*

"Verse." Oct. 28, 1950: 126-130.
Guillaume Apollinaire – *Selected Writings of Guillaume Apollinaire*, trans. by Roger Shattuck
Wallace Stevens – *The Auroras of Autumn*
William Van O'Connor – *The Shaping Spirit: A Study of Wallace Stevens*

"Verse." Nov. 4, 1950: 157-162.
Marcel Raymond – *From Baudelaire to Surrealism*
Lloyd Frankenberg – *Pleasure Dome: On Reading Modern Poetry*

John Ciardi, ed. – *Mid-Century American Poets*

"Verse." Mar. 17, 1951: 126-128.
W.H. Auden and Norman Holmes Pearson, eds. - *Poets of the English Language*

"Verse." June 9, 1951: 109-113.
Delmore Schwartz – *Vaudeville for a Princess*
James Merrill – *First Poems*
Robert Lowell – *The Mills of the Kavanaughs*
W.H. Auden – *Nones*
Richard Wilbur – *Ceremony and Other Poems*
William Jay Smith – *Celebration at Dark*

"Verse." Feb. 16, 1952: 107-108.
Horace Gregory – *Selected Poems*
Randall Jarrell – *The Seven-League Crutches*
Richard Eberhart – *Selected Poems*
Theodore Roethke – *Praise to the End!*

"Books: Verse." Aug. 2, 1952: 65-66.
Dylan Thomas – *In Country Sleep*
Marianne Moore – *Collected Poems*

"Verse." Nov. 8, 1952: 165-169.
Babette Deutsch – *Poetry in Our Time*
Elizabeth Sewell – *The Structure of Poetry*

"Books: Verse." Jan. 31, 1953: 75-76.
W.S. Merwin – *A Mask for Janus*
Peter Viereck – *The First Morning*
T.S. Eliot – *The Complete Poems and Plays*

"Verse." May 9, 1953: 133-137.
St.-John Perse – *Winds*, trans. by Hugh Chisholm
Kenneth Rexroth – *The Dragon and the Unicorn*

"Verse." Sept. 19, 1953: 113-118.
Marguerite Caetani, ed. – *Botteghe Oscure: An International Review of Literature*
Edgar Bogardus – *Various Jangling Keys*

"Verse." Oct. 24, 1953: 157-159.
Robert Penn Warren – *Brother to Dragons*
Theodore Roethke – *The Waking*

"Verse." Feb. 27, 1954: 98-101.
Edith Sitwell – *Gardeners and Astronomers*
Kathleen Raine – *The Year One*
Louise Townsend Nicholl – *Collected Poems*
May Sarton – *The Land of Silence*

"Verse." June 5, 1954: 133-135.
Karl Shapiro – *Poems 1940-1953*
Anthony Hecht – *A Summoning of Stones*
Barbara Howes – *In the Cold Country*

"Books: Verse." Sept. 4, 1954: 68-69.
Marianne Moore, trans. – *The Fables of La Fontaine*
Leonie Adams – *Poems: A Selection*

"Verse." Oct. 16, 1954: 142-146.
John Hall Wheelock, ed. – *Poets of Today*
James Kirkup – *A Spring Journey and Other Poems of 1952-1953*
Vernon Watkins – *The Death Bell: Poems and Ballads*

"Verse." Dec. 11, 1954: 198-202.
Wallace Stevens – *The Collected Poems of Wallace Stevens*
E.E. Cummings – *Poems 1923-1954*

"Books: Enigma." Feb. 26, 1955: 106-108.
Gay Wilson Allen – *The Solitary Singer: A Critical Biography of Walt Whitman*
Milton Hindus, ed. – Leaves of Grass*: One Hundred Years After*

"Verse." Apr. 30, 1955: 123-125.
W.H. Auden – *The Shield of Achilles*
Stephen Spender – *Collected Poems*
Howard Nemerov – *The Salt Garden*
Elder Olson – *The Scarecrow Christ*
Ben Belitt – *Wilderness Stair: Poems 1938-1954*

"Books: Verse." July 30, 1955: 67-68.
Marianne Moore - *Predilections*
Robert Graves – *Collected Poems 1955*
Ruthven Todd – *A Mantelpiece of Shells*
Constance Carrier – *The Middle Voice*

"Books: The Poet Dickinson Comes to Life." Oct. 8, 1955: 190-191.
Emily Dickinson – *The Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ed. by Thomas H. Johnson.
Adrienne Rich – *The Diamond Cutters*

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Hugh MacDiarmid – *Collected Poems of Hugh MacDiarmid*
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Sandra Hochman – *Manhatten Pastures*
May Swenson – *To Mix with Time*
Anne Sexton – *All My Pretty Ones*

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Kenneth Koch – *Thank You and Other Poems*
Frederick Seidel – *Final Solutions*

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Louis MacNeice – *Collected Poems 1925-48*

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Edith Sitwell – *Music and Ceremonies*

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Karl Shapiro – *The Bourgeois Poet*
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Ben Belitt – *The Enemy Joy*
William Meredith – *The Wreck of the Threshes*
Robert Sward – *Kissing the Dancer*
J.V. Cunningham – *To What Strangers, What Welcome*
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Richard Ellmann – *Eminent Domain: Yeats Among Wilde, Joyce, Pound, Eliot, and Auden*
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Nelly Sachs – *O the Chimeys*
Christian Morgenstern – *Gallows Songs*, trans. by W.D. Snodgrass and Lore Segal

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Marianne Moore – *The Complete Poems of Marianne Moore*
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Ted Hughes – *Wodwo*
Alan Dugan – *Poems 3*
John Berryman – *Short Poems*
Anthony Hecht – *The Hard Hours*
Jean Garrigue – *New and Selected Poems*

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W.D. Snodgrass – *After Experience*
W.S. Merwin – *The Lice*
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Ralph Pomeroy – *In the Financial District*
Ned O'Gorman – *The Harvester's Vase*
Thomas Kinsella – *Nightwalker and Other Poems*